

Shomron: Less chances of war with Syria

TEL AVIV (AP) — The army's retiring chief of staff, Dan Shomron, said Wednesday the chances of Syria waging war against Israel were reduced by the smouldering of Iraq's military power. He argued that to take on Israel, Syria would have to depend on Iraq as a "strategic backbone. Therefore, I definitely don't think we can speak in terms of an inevitable war with Syria." Lieutenant-General Shomron's four-year term ends April 1, and he is to be replaced by Maj. Gen. Elad Barak, his deputy. Gen. Shomron said the Gulf war put Israel in a new "position of strength despite not having acted against Iraq when missiles fell here." Gen. Shomron asserted that the Syrians were using their status as a wartime ally of the United States to purchase more sophisticated weapons. Israeli officials have said in recent weeks that Syria has received a shipment of improved missiles from North Korea. Still, he said, "in my opinion, today the probability that Syria by its own initiative will go to war looks smaller." He added: "Without the strategic depth of Iraq, without the Soviet superpower umbrella as in the past, under these circumstances... the likelihood it will decide to go to war is lower."



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Jordan air force jet crashes

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordanian Royal Airforce said Wednesday that it lost one of its planes during exercises held at night. An official spokesman said that the plane went down due to a technical failure while taking part in a night exercise with several other air force jets in southern Jordan, but the pilot ejected safely. The spokesman said that the crash took place Tuesday, March 26, 1991.

Russian Patriarch arrives in Israel

TEL AVIV (AP) — The head of the Russian Orthodox Church arrived in Israel from the Soviet Union Wednesday to visit Christian holy sites. He said he hoped to arrange regular pilgrimages of Soviet Christians. Patriarch Alexi II's five-day trip is his first to the Holy Land since he was invested in his post last June.

Violence erupts in Paris suburb after Arab youth killed

PARIS (R) — Arabs attacked policemen and set fire to vehicles in a working-class Paris suburb early on Wednesday after a young Arab was shot dead, police said. Eyewitnesses told French Radio the Arab was shot at close range on Tuesday night by an armed supermarket security guard after a dispute and scuffle in the shop. Police said they were questioning two security guards, also believed to be of Arab origin, in connection with the incident. After the shooting, about 100 angry young Arabs gathered near a shopping centre in western Sartrouville, pelting police with bottles and stones, slightly injuring five officers, police said.

Iran hints at release of prisoner

LONDON (AP) — An Iranian official has indicated that the government may soon release Roger Cooper, a British businessman who has been imprisoned for more than five years, the British Broadcasting Corporation reported Wednesday. Javad Larjani, an adviser to the foreign minister, said Iran may respond to a request from Britain for a reduction of sentence. Mr. Cooper, 55, was tried in secret and his sentence has not been disclosed. "My prediction is that his release shouldn't be very far from now," Mr. Larjani said in an interview broadcast on BBC television.

Israeli officer jailed in arms scam

TEL AVIV (AP) — Brig. Gen. Rami Dotan, former chief purchasing officer in the Israeli air force, was sentenced Wednesday to 13 years in prison for amassing some \$10 million in bribes and kickbacks on purchases of U.S. equipment. Gen. Dotan's rank was reduced to private, and he will be dishonorably discharged from the air force, the military court said.

Italian minister heads for Iran

ROME (R) — Italian Foreign Minister Gianni De Michelis left for Tehran Wednesday, hoping to make progress on one of the main bones of contention between the West and Iran — the fate of 12 Western hostages held in Lebanon. He is to hold talks with President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati Thursday and was expected to ask for help in securing the release of Western hostages held by pro-Iranian groups in Lebanon.

U.S. commander in Bahrain

BAHRAIN (AP) — General Norman Schwarzkopf arrived Wednesday to probe post-war arrangements expected to give Bahrain a prominent role. The general, who led the coalition forces against Iraq in the Gulf war, said recently that he was close to agreement on an advance headquarters in the Gulf war for his Florida-based U.S. central command (see page 2).

New Iraqi cabinet formally takes office

Saddam tells ministers they have six months to prove themselves

Combined agency dispatches

IRAQI PRESIDENT Saddam Hussein, who promised reforms and more democracy as rebels across the country battled to overthrow the government, told his new cabinet it had up to six months to prove itself.

"You are facing a difficult period... in my estimation, four months, or at the most six months, are sufficient for a minister to show if he can do the job," President Saddam told his ministers.

Baghdad Radio Wednesday broadcast a recording of President Saddam's speech to the cabinet when it took the constitutional oath at a special ceremony. "We... are determined to support you as much as we can to help you perform your duties," President Saddam said.

The Iraqi News Agency (INA) said the defence and interior ministers, key players in the unrest in Shi'ite southern Iraq and the Kurdish north, did not attend the ceremony.

INA said the ministers were on duty outside Baghdad but did not

elaborate.

It said those present at the swearing in ceremony were led by newly-appointed Prime Minister Saadoun Hammadi.

After promising reform and more democracy, President Saddam last week drew his new cabinet from ruling Baath Party loyalists.

At Tuesday's ceremony he told the new ministers their duties should be carried out "away from any interference by the party."

It was the first time that President Saddam orders his cabinet not to allow powerful party officials to interfere in their work.

"Work in the new phase should be according to the law and constitution away from any interference... no authority should be above that of the law," he said.

He said he would not tolerate any violation of the law or misuse of authority.

Government and party officials have been touring parts of the country in an effort to restore normal life paralysed as a result of heavy damage suffered during the six-week Gulf war and subsequent rebellion.

Dr. Hammadi on Saturday visited the provinces of Najaf and Qadissiyah, among the first to be gripped by post-war unrest in southern Iraq.

President Saddam spoke to his ministers of his distress over events after the Gulf war ended.

"The most important thing that faced us after the U.S. aggression, or rather, that has been intertwined with the U.S. aggression, is this treason by certain people and treachery by others from outside the country," he said.

"We are pained by it, but at the same time, it is a lesson in life," he added.

Iraq has accused Iran of helping rebels in the south and north, but Tehran repeatedly said it was not involved in the rebellion.

The Al Jomhuriyah daily said Wednesday that security and order had been restored throughout the south.

Dismissing widespread reports that most of Kurdish northern Iraq was in rebel hands, the paper said "the mopping up of

(Continued on page 5)

Security Council edges closer to adopting Gulf war resolution

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — Iraq would have to destroy its chemical, biological and nuclear weapons and would still face an arms embargo under permanent ceasefire terms according to the text of a proposed Security Council resolution.

The draft resolution would clear the way to convert the month-old ceasefire into a formal end to hostilities, after which foreign troops would withdraw from Iraq and the U.N.-sanctioned economic embargo would be lifted.

The permanent council members — the United States, Britain, China, France and the Soviet Union — met again Wednesday to approve their draft (see page 2) and officially give it to the other 10 council members, diplomats said.

A vote could take place this weekend but is considered more likely next week, they said.

Broad agreement was reached on the resolution after the Soviet

Union dropped its objections to provisions including the destruction of chemical and nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons materials under U.N. supervision, diplomats said.

The weapons embargo would be maintained, but some conventional arms purchases could be permitted later on the basis of genuine need, diplomats said.

The draft approved by the permanent five council members also "demands that Iraq and Kuwait respect the inviolability of the international boundary" between the two countries agreed upon in 1963, a provision sought by Kuwait.

The border has never been clearly marked.

The latest draft resolution dropped an earlier U.S. term that would have permitted the allied coalition forces to use "all necessary means" — a code word for military force — to enforce the sanctity of the border.

Secretary-General Javier Perez

de Cuellar would make arrangements with Iraq and Kuwait to demarcate the border.

The U.N. chief would also dispatch U.N. military observers to monitor the border, stationing them 10 kilometres into Iraq and five kilometres into Kuwait.

China's exact position on the proposed draft was not known, but Western diplomats said the Beijing government was expected to abstain. China abstained in voting on the Nov. 29 resolution that authorised the use of military force against Iraq.

China reportedly sought linkage between destruction of Iraq's chemical and unconventional arms and the destruction of those arms in other countries in the region, including Israel's nuclear arsenal.

Yemeni Ambassador Abdullah Al Ashtal, the only Arab on the Security Council, complained to reporters Tuesday that the draft

(Continued on page 5)

Kuwait denies mistreatment of Palestinians; reports say otherwise

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait denied Wednesday that Palestinians were tortured and killed in the emirate after the Gulf war. Relief workers said Palestinians were still dying in jails from malnutrition and dehydration.

"We have confidence that the world community has the ability to evaluate such falsehoods," Information Minister Bader Jassim Al Yacoub said in a statement.

The U.S.-based Human Rights Watch group said 30 to 40 people, mainly Palestinians, had been killed and 2,000 were detained by Kuwaitis seeking revenge as the war ended in the emirate four weeks ago.

Mr. Yacoub said his country was "ready to investigate all claims concerning the alleged illegal conduct of any Kuwaiti."

One well-placed foreign relief worker said some army detention centres were so overcrowded that about 20 prisoners had died of lack of water, food and medical treatment.

"They are dying in significant numbers, a couple of dozen, from dehydration, malnutrition and lack of medical care to beating wounds," said the relief worker, who asked not to be named.

The Kuwaiti News Agency (KUNA) quoted a letter to U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar from Kuwait's ambassador to the United Nations as

saying the International Committee of the Red Cross was free "to visit and meet any detainees in Kuwait."

KUNA said Ambassador Abdullah Abu Al Hassan told Mr. Perez de Cuellar the Kuwaiti government "is striving to preserve security and protect citizens and residents... it asserts that every citizen is responsible in front of the law for his actions and it will not allow any violations."

Mr. Hassan said "malicious" reports against Kuwait seemed to ignore "the fleeing of 100,000 Palestinians and the confiscation of their properties and the killing of some of them during the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait."

Kuwait's Crown Prince Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabah met 12 prominent Palestinians Tuesday to discuss what an official called "the tense relationship" with the Palestinians.

The official said the 12 Palestinians criticised the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) for supporting Iraq and issuing exaggerated claims of torture and murder of Palestinians in Kuwait.

Sheikh Saad, who is also prime minister, denied a PLO charge that 200 Palestinians had been killed since Iraq left Kuwait last month, but gave no figures of his own.

He said all prisoners would receive proper treatment. Some Palestinians in Kuwait

have accused security forces of continued abuses.

About 400,000 Palestinians were living in Kuwait when Iraq seized the emirate last Aug. 2. About 170,000 have remained.

Kuwaiti officials said the Palestinian leaders assured the crown prince of their loyalty and described those who had collaborated with the Iraqis as "a few misguided elements."

Kuwaiti officials and Arab diplomats played down reports of torture of Palestinians as isolated incidents by resistance groups who operated during the Iraqi occupation.

Human rights workers say regular army officers were involved in the abuses.

Middle East Watch said last Thursday that Kuwaiti security forces and freelance gangs are using lit cigarettes, knives and other instruments to torture hundreds of people.

About 2,000 people are currently being held, and many, "possibly the majority," have been abused, said Andrew Whitely, executive director of the group.

Many detainees are Palestinians. The U.S. army has pressured the Kuwaiti government to investigate the human rights abuses. U.S. army civil affairs

(Continued on page 5)

EC official: Israel not to get 'off hook'

BRUSSELS (R) — A European Community (EC) official said on Wednesday Israel should not be allowed to "get off the hook once again" over resolving the Palestinian issue now that the Gulf war was over. Eberhard Rhein, who is in charge of Middle Eastern issues at the EC's Executive Commission, told a conference that resolving the Palestinian problem was the top priority for the future security of the region. "It is going to be extremely difficult and long, but the window of opportunity opened after the end of (Gulf war) hostilities. It will be open only a short time. The outside powers should not let Israel get off the hook once again," Mr. Rhein said. Mr. Rhein said he could not imagine peace between Israel and the Arabs as long as Israel maintained its hold on the occupied territories, and before Syria and Israel reached a settlement over the Golan Heights and withdrew their forces from Lebanon. During the Gulf crisis, the EC rejected Israeli attempts to link its invasion of Kuwait to the Palestinian question and other aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict. But it stressed the need for new efforts to tackle these issues once the crisis had been settled.



His Majesty King Hussein Wednesday meets with French National Assembly Speaker Laurent Fabius (Petra photo)

Crown Prince: U.S.-Jordan ties moving towards pre-crisis status

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan has described Jordanian-American relations over the past three decades as strong and based on friendship, understanding and mutual cooperation but he said these ties were marred by the Gulf crisis.

However, contacts which have commenced now represent a step in the right direction towards reconstructing these relations to their former status in the best interest of the two sides, Prince Hassan said in a statement published by the Cairo daily Al Ahram.

The Crown Prince, who returned home Tuesday from a working visit which included a stop in San Francisco to attend a

conference and deliver an address on the situation in the region, said the Gulf war did not result in eroding U.S.-Jordanian relations.

Adnan Abu Odeh, His Majesty King Hussein's political advisor, is currently in the United States for talks on the Middle East and the Gulf situation with American officials.

A State Department spokeswoman, commenting on Mr. Abu Odeh's talks with Secretary of State James Baker and other officials, said: "Jordan has a potentially important role to play in post-war search for peace and security in the region."

Prince Hassan told Al Ahram that ideas advocated by the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) on the future of the

(Continued on page 5)

King: Chances ripe for peace

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein said Wednesday that the present international and regional circumstances offer a chance that should be seized by all concerned parties to find a lasting and just solution to the Palestine problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Speaking at a meeting held at the Al Nadwa Palace with French National Assembly Speaker Laurent Fabius, King Hussein stressed that the Palestinian leadership is alone empowered to speak for the Palestinian people in the course of peace efforts.

King Hussein reviewed with Mr. Fabius the consequences of the Gulf war on Jordan which, he said, was the worst hit by the crisis.

The two sides also had a comprehensive review of the developments in the region in the aftermath of the Gulf war and the impact of the crisis on the whole region.

Mr. Fabius stressed that France was concerned to deal with the results of the Gulf crisis and to find a just and durable solution to the Middle East problem.

Mr. Fabius said that his country was also keen to bolster ties with Jordan in all fields.

Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, acting Foreign Minister and Information Minister Ibrahim Izzeddin and French Ambassador to Jordan Denis Bouchard were present at the audience.

Mr. Fabius left later Wednesday (see earlier story on page 3).

Baker meets envoys

Middle East peace efforts were also the theme for discussions between U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, who visited the region 10 days ago, and Israel's ambassador and a senior Egyptian official on Monday.

State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said Mr. Baker asked the two governments to determine "what they may be prepared to do" to move towards peace and that the Israeli ambassador, Zalman Shoval, who was leaving Washington later for Israel, would consult with officials there on his return.

"The purpose of these meetings is to begin the process of probing to see what they may be prepared to do," Mr. Tutwiler told reporters.

"I would characterise the phase that we are in now as trying to determine what the points of convergence are between the parties," she added.

Towards the end of this trip to the Middle East and the Soviet Union on March 16, Mr. Baker said he found new attitudes

(Continued on page 5)

Tension runs high over Moscow rally

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Fears that force will be used against a pro-reform demonstration soared Wednesday with the appearance of 24 armoured personnel carriers at a Moscow military base.

Hundreds of police officers cordoned off Red Square, meanwhile, and barred pedestrians from nearby Manezh Square where the protest is planned Thursday.

Anxiety over the prospect of a confrontation already was high because of the Kremlin's announcement Monday that it was banning all rallies until mid-April and President Mikhail Gorbachev's transfer of the city police force to the national Interior Ministry on Tuesday.

The anti-communist coalition Democratic Russia said it expects 500,000 people to attend Thursday's rally to protest attempts to oust Gorbachev rival Boris Yeltsin from his position as chairman of the Russian Parliament.

Moscow's reform-minded city leaders, who have given permission for the rally, appealed to the nation's constitutional oversight

committee to rule the Kremlin ban on demonstrations unconstitutional.

The armoured vehicles arrived over the weekend at a military base just five kilometres from the Kremlin and the planned protest site, officials said. The unit of 24 vehicles could be seen from the street.

"Telephones in the editorial office were burning up with calls from upset readers," the Moscow City Council's newspaper, Kuranty, reported under a photograph of the armoured vehicles.

It quoted the base commander as saying the unit was merely passing through Moscow and would soon leave.

"What a strange explanation," it said, noting that most trucks and heavy vehicles are banned from driving through the city centre.

Muscovites expressed shock and disbelief. "Come on, you can't tell me there are tanks in this neighbourhood," said an elderly woman standing on a street near the base, before she

looked through the gate.

KGB officers, responsible for security at Red Square, cordoned off the demonstration area with small metal barriers.

"Our people will act in accordance with the law, but the column shall not pass," vowed Major-General Lev Belyanskys of the Interior Ministry.

The Interior Ministry announced it had prepared anti-riot measures, including water cannon, horse patrols, rubber truncheons, tear gas and a brigade of police dogs.

KGB units and local police, placed under direct central control by a special order of President Gorbachev, declared their readiness in a scare campaign clearly designed to discourage demonstrators from taking to the streets.

Hardliners increased the pressure for a crackdown.

The official TASS news agency said Wednesday that the Soyuz group of legislators had demanded that the president use emergency powers to end the

country's political and economic crisis. They also called for Mr. Gorbachev to account for his performance at a special session of the national congress.

The warning signals were reminiscent of those before a February 1990 democratic rally, when the Kremlin unleashed a fear campaign to keep down the crowds. The demonstration passed peacefully.

Tens of thousands of striking coal miners — many already calling for Mr. Gorbachev's resignation — pledged support for Mr. Yeltsin and the country's democratic movement.

Strike leaders also dismissed suggestions made by Mr. Gorbachev on Tuesday that a solution to the month-long stoppage, which threatens to cripple Soviet heavy industry, was at hand.

"That's his business, but the strike goes on," said a Ukrainian mine leader.

"If there is a confrontation, we'll be for Yeltsin. How can we back Gorbachev when we are demanding his resignation?"

U.S. retains powerful military capability in Gulf

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — U.S. forces are coming home from the Gulf by the thousands, but the United States has preserved a powerful offensive capability in the region — at least until a ceasefire is reached.

Almost a month after the war with Iraq ended, 411,500 U.S. troops remain in the Gulf, including all but a handful of more than 300,000 army soldiers sent to the region.

U.S. Defence Department spokesman Pete Williams said Tuesday that 123,500 members from all the services have left the Gulf. Two of the six aircraft carrier groups deployed in the Gulf are returning to the United States this week, he said.

The most substantial redeployment has come in the navy, with 42,000 of the 85,000 sailors in the Gulf region having left for home-ports or new assignments.

The army, holding 15 per cent of Iraqi territory until a formal ceasefire is signed with Baghdad, has seen the least movement. The Defence Department says 28,000 soldiers have left the theatre of operations, leaving 277,000 in place.

Mr. Williams said U.S. troops will retain a powerful force in the Gulf until the region's "security" is assured. "They will stay until the formal ceasefire is worked out," he said.

U.S. forces have shown their continued offensive posture in the past week by downing two Iraqi warplanes that violated a U.S. ban on flights over Iraq.

The military said 25,000 air force personnel have left the Gulf, leaving 31,000 on duty, while 33,500 marines have left and 60,500 remain.

There now are three aircraft carriers in the Gulf region and the Red Sea — the Ranger, the Roosevelt and the America — down from six during the war. U.S. naval deployment includes 51 ships in the Gulf region, 22 ships in the Red Sea and 13 ships in the Mediterranean.

Mr. Williams said the return of U.S. troops in Iraq depends partly on the U.N. Security Council, which this week is expected to announce the terms of a ceasefire, including the establishment of a U.N. observer force stationed along Iraq's border with Kuwait (see story below).

Creating an observer force would allow the U.S. military to decide on its pullout schedule, Mr. Williams said. "I'm not prepared to say today... when, during the process of getting a U.N. observer force, when would we come out," he said.

The Pentagon spokesman also elaborated on current U.S. troop movements inside Iraq, with the army's tank corps from Germany

moving to the west and north to take over positions held by the army's 18th airborne corps, a lighter force that is returning to the United States.

The spokesman said U.S. troops in occupied Iraq have assumed a role in ensuring the welfare of local civilians, treating 1,124 wounded or sick Iraqis and helping the Red Cross deliver rice, beans, dried milk, cooking oil and baby formula to refugees.

Qadhafi assails Bahrain

Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi said Tuesday that Bahrain had become "an American colony" by indicating it would accept a U.S. central command headquarters.

Col. Qadhafi, apparently referring to a New York Times report, said Arabs were bitter about the news that "Bahrain has become an American base for rapid intervention forces."

"In this way, Bahrain has lost its own independence, just as Palestine lost its independence," the Libyan leader said in an interview from Libya with Italy's state-owned television Rai-One.

"The Arab nations can not allow the emirate of Bahrain to become an American colony," he added. "This is a black day... now Bahrain has become a colony."

U.N. envoy to Mideast undaunted

WASHINGTON (AP) — The new United Nations special envoy for the Middle East says he wants to be optimistic about finding "more than peace" in the Middle East.

"If you asked four years ago if the Berlin Wall would come down that also would have been called mission impossible," Swiss Ambassador Edouard Brunner told the Associated Press.

Mr. Brunner, one of his government's most senior diplomats, was to leave for New York Wednesday to talk with U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar.

Mr. Perez de Cuellar last week named Br. Brunner his special representative to undertake a new search for a Mideast settlement in accordance with U.N. Security Council resolutions.

Mr. Brunner, 59, said he will remain ambassador to the United States.

In his search for a Middle East solution, "we have to look for something more than mere peace, we want a peace of security and human rights," he said in a Tuesday interview.

"We had peace for 40 years in Eastern Europe — the peace of the Berlin Wall, the peace of Ceausescu, the peace of the Gulag," he said, referring to the late Romanian communist leader Nicolae Ceausescu and to the Soviet prison camp network.

The world community's attitude towards apartheid in South Africa confirms that human rights has emerged as a foreign policy issue, Mr. Brunner said. With modern communications, "it would be a very cynical world" to continue regarding the way countries treat their own people as purely domestic matters, he added.

Mr. Brunner also hopes to deal with practical matters such as economics, confidence-building and weapons supplies, Brunner said.

Switzerland does not belong to the United Nations but the world organisation often uses its diplomats as special envoys.

Non-membership can be an advantage, Mr. Brunner said, because "it means we have never voted — so we are completely 'untainted'."

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Saudi-Iranian ties restored, but embassies remain shut

RIYADH (AP) — Saudi Arabia and Iran have formally resumed ties after a three-year split, but their embassy doors remained shut.

Diplomatic sources said only technical teams visited each other's capitals recently to assess the conditions of the premises, and flag-raising ceremonies would await the arrival of advance diplomatic teams.

"Technically, relations have now been resumed, whether the embassies are open or not," said one of the diplomats, who could not be further identified.

They expected the first Iranian diplomatic group in Riyadh within days, and at least before the end of Ramadan around April 11. A similar Saudi team will also proceed to Tehran, Ambassadors of the two countries have yet to be named.

The two countries agreed last week to set aside their longstanding rivalry and restore ties in response to an intensive mediation bid by Oman, prompted by the need for stability in the Gulf in wake of the war.

The Iranians restored ties with Jordan earlier this month and exchanged interest sections with Cairo, which analysts believe is a first step to restoration of ties with Egypt.

Saudi Arabia ruptured its ties with Iran in April 1988, accusing the leaders of the Islamic revolution of terrorism and subversion. It followed the repeated annual attempts by the Iranian pilgrims to the annual Hajj to Mecca with political demonstrations and alleged terrorist attempts, culminating in the clashes with the Saudi police in 1987 which led to the death of 102 pilgrims. Most were Iranians.

The Saudi embassy in Tehran was ravaged by mobs in wake of the Mecca incident that year, when one of the Saudi diplomats was also killed after falling from a window during the riots. The Kuwait embassy was also stormed.

The diplomatic sources said that the Saudi technical team found their embassy premises in Tehran in poor shape, but gave

no details.

A reporter who drove to the Iranian embassy in the diplomatic quarters of Riyadh Tuesday said the surrounding palm trees were dead, reduced to sacks of straw.

A diplomatic source said that was because the Saudis cut off water when relations were cut in 1988.

A lone Saudi guard stood outside the locked gate.

Turkey had been asked by Iran to take charge of its interests in Saudi Arabia but had not reopened the embassy premises. No reasons were given.

The official restoration of Saudi-Iranian relations Tuesday comes just three months before the annual pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, home of Islam's holiest shrines.

Iran had boycotted the Haj since 1988, also when the Saudis cited massive renovation programme at Mecca and Medina and clamped a quota of 1,000 per million for Islamic nations.

Iran's state-run Tehran Times, which reflects official thinking, said earlier this month that the resumption of ties follows agreement on the number of Iranians to be allowed in this year's pilgrimage.

The Times, quoting anonymous sources in Tehran, said Riyadh has agreed to allow 110,000 Iranians on the pilgrimage this year, more than twice the number allowed previously.

Diplomatic sources said the Tehran Times report was roughly correct as Saudi Arabia was prepared to allow more Iranian pilgrims in place of those it did not expect this year — namely, those from Iraq and possibly some of its supportive states.

The sources said that the Iranians also agreed through the Omani mediators to restrict Iranian political gatherings to their compound, which is on the outskirts of Mecca.

Until last year, the Iranians were openly calling for the overthrow of the Saudi ruling family, on grounds they were unfit as guardians of the holy cities. The call was emanated by Iraq during its occupation of Kuwait.

China: Gulf war does not set precedent for future conflicts

BEIJING (Agencies) — China warned Wednesday that the world should not view the result of the Gulf war as a pretext for future use of force to settle conflicts.

"The Gulf war cannot set out the precedent for the use of force to settle international disputes," Foreign Minister Qian Qichen told a news conference.

He reiterated that China supported peaceful, political resolutions to international conflicts.

"The Gulf war has not changed this basic norm," he said.

China, one of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, abstained on the resolution authorising force against Baghdad. It voted with the other four — the Soviet Union, Britain, France and the United States — for all earlier resolutions on the conflict.

China did not regret staying out of the anti-Iraq coalition, Qian said.

"There's no need for us to have any second thoughts about this," he said.

Before Baghdad invaded Kuwait on August 2, China had been a major arms supplier to Iraq.

Mr. Qian said China's arms sales as a whole were "very very limited."

"China has always acted in a very prudent and responsible way," he said.

China could not be held to agreements on limiting arms sales that it did not take part in negotiating, he said.

Ties with Israel

Mr. Qian also dismissed short-



Qian Qichen

term plans to establish diplomatic relations between Israel and China.

"There are no political ties between China and Israel," Mr. Qian said.

"Recently an Israeli official came to China on a private visit, so you can't talk about the question of Chinese-Israeli relations becoming diplomatic relations," he said.

The official who visited, Reuven Merhav, director-general of Israel's foreign ministry, told Israeli radio Tuesday he was very positive about relations with Beijing.

"I think the next few months will bring very positive developments and we are talking about normalisation," he said.

A Western diplomat in Beijing said many steps could be taken toward normalisation that fall short of formal diplomatic relations, and cited trade visa offices as examples.

Though China recognises Palestine as a state, diplomats believe there is military cooperation between China and Israel.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Bombs explode at Istanbul, Izmir

ISTANBUL (R) — Bombs exploded outside the Istanbul office of the Dutch-British Shell oil company and a branch of U.S.-based Citibank in the Aegean port city of Izmir overnight, Turkey's Anatolian news agency said Wednesday. The semi-official agency said an extreme leftist group, the Turkish People's Liberation Party Front (THKP/C), claimed responsibility for the attacks in calls to Turkish newspapers. The blasts shattered windows but caused no serious damage, the agency said. A passer-by was slightly injured in the explosion in Izmir. There have been a series of leftist bombings against Western targets in Turkey in protest at the U.S.-led Gulf war in which Iraq's occupation troops left Kuwait.

Algeria legalises 42nd political party

ALGIERS (R) — The Algerian authorities have legalised a 42nd political party, the Algerian Liberal Party (PLA), which advocates economic and political liberalism, the official Algerian news agency APS said Tuesday. The party, led by businessman Ahmad Sebti, favours separating Islam from the state and says the state's role in the economy should be limited to strategic sectors and mediation between social groups. Its manifesto, published in late January, says the first Muslims were pioneers of liberalism. It publishes its statements in English and Arabic, but not in French as other Algerian parties do. Algeria introduced a multiparty system in 1989 after 27 years of one-party rule by the National Liberation Front. The first multiparty general elections are expected to take place in late June or early July.

Soviet aid to Kabul will not be cut

ISLAMABAD (R) — The Soviet Union will not cut its aid to Afghanistan, despite its own economic difficulties, the Soviet ambassador in Kabul was quoted as saying on Tuesday by official Kabul Radio. Ambassador Boris Pastukhov was quoted in the broadcast, monitored in the Pakistani capital Islamabad, telling a news conference in Kabul that Soviet aid would continue at last year's level. The radio gave no aid figures, but quoted the diplomat as saying commercial goods worth more than 500 million rubles would be exchanged this year.

Two hardline Lebanese ministers visit Syria

BEIRUT (R) — Two hardline Christian ministers in Lebanon's national unity cabinet went to Damascus for talks Wednesday on a Syrian-backed peace pact aimed at ending nearly 16 years of civil war. Official sources said the head of the Falange Party, George Saadeh, and Roger Dib of the anti-Syrian Lebanese Forces (LF) militia were scheduled to discuss how to fully implement the accord with Vice-President Abdul Halim Khaddam. Mr. Dib's visit to Syria is the first by an LF official in five years.

'Some hostages may be out by Easter'

BEIRUT (AP) — Lebanon's prestigious Al Nahar newspaper reported Wednesday that some of the foreign hostages held in Lebanon would be released for Easter. "Diplomatic sources expect the release of some foreign hostages on the occasion of Easter," the paper said in a 12-word news brief on page two. It did not disclose further details. Such briefs, run daily on page two, are among the most widely read items in the newspaper. The newspaper did not specify whether it referred to the Western Easter this Sunday or the Orthodox Easter on April 7. But Lebanese often celebrate the whole week in between.

French firm probing Iraqi link reports

PARIS (R) — French publishing company Hachette said Tuesday it was investigating reports that it was partly owned by associates of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. Hachette said in a statement it had begun an investigation to identify the shareholders of Montana Management, which owns 8.4 per cent of the French media group and has been reported to be controlled by associates of the Iraqi leader. Hachette said if Iraqi interests own Montana Management's capital, it will alert relevant authorities so that they can implement decisions taken under the auspices of the United Nations to freeze Iraqi assets after it invaded Kuwait last August. Hachette said it was prepared, if necessary, to repurchase the shares owned by the Geneva-based Montana Management.

Israel says four Patriot batteries to stay

TEL AVIV (R) — Four U.S. Patriot batteries airlifted to Israel to combat Iraqi missile attacks in the Gulf war will remain deployed in the country, Defence Minister Moshe Arens said Tuesday. Mr. Arens also said Israel had planned to strike back at Iraqi missile bases but refrained from doing so to safeguard the unity of the U.S.-led coalition. He told the parliamentary foreign affairs and defence committee that Israel was speeding the production of its own anti-missile missile, the Arrow, sources present at the meeting said. The second Arrow test launch was conducted Monday.

Egypt arrests 'infiltrator'

CAIRO (R) — Egyptian Interior Minister Mohammad Abdul Halim Musa said police Tuesday arrested an Iraqi intelligence officer who planned to kill him. Reporting remarks by Mr. Musa in an early Wednesday edition, the semi-official newspaper Al-Ahram said the arrest took to 66 the number of would-be saboteurs from Iraq detained. Egypt claims most were Egyptians forcibly recruited by Iraq to carry out sabotage in Egypt, a key member of the U.S.-led anti-Iraq coalition. They were among tens of thousands of Egyptians who have returned home since the Gulf war started in January.

Palestinian, Saudi ambassadors meet

TUNIS (R) — The Palestinian and Saudi ambassadors in Tunis met Tuesday for the first time since the outbreak of the Gulf war, officials said Wednesday. Relations between Saudi Arabia and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) deteriorated sharply during the Gulf crisis because of Palestinian support for Iraq against the U.S.-led alliance, of which the kingdom was a key member. The allies used Saudi Arabia as a springboard from which to launch the operation to expel Iraq from Kuwait last month. The PLO news agency Wafa said the ambassadors, Hakam Balawi of the PLO and Ibrahim Saad Al Ibrahim of Saudi Arabia, discussed "the latest developments in the Palestinian cause."

Draft U.N. resolution on Gulf war

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Following are main points in a 20-page Security Council draft resolution setting out terms for a permanent ceasefire, the destruction of Iraq's chemical weapons and a mechanism for war reparations. The draft is subject to change:

1. Ceasefire

— A formal ceasefire comes into effect when Iraq officially accepts the resolution.

2. Borders

— Iraq and Kuwait must respect a disputed 1963 border and the United Nations must demarcate it. — The Security Council is to guarantee the frontier taking as appropriate all necessary measures to that end.

3. Peacekeeping and troops

— U.N. military observers are to monitor a demilitarised zone extending 10 kilometres into Iraq and five kilometres into Kuwait.

— The resolution "notes" that the deployment of this force allows the allies to remove their troops from Iraq.

4. Weapons of mass destruction

— Iraq must accept unconditionally under international supervision the destruction or removal of all chemical and biological weapons, ballistic missile systems, subsystems, components, research, development and related facilities.

— A similar procedure is to be instituted for the removal of nuclear weapons or nuclear weapons-usable material.

— Iraq is to submit within 15 days after resolution is adopted a declaration of locations, amounts and types of all the above items and agree to on-site inspection.

— The secretary-general is to set up a commission within 45 days after adoption of the resolution to carry out on-site inspections and to destroy or render harmless the weapons. The plan is to be

carried out within another 45 days.

— The United Nations is to develop a plan for future monitoring and verification of Iraq's compliance.

— The above actions represent "steps towards" the goal "of establishing in the Middle East a zone free from weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile systems."

5. Compensation

— Iraq, without prejudice to debts arising prior to its invasion of Kuwait, is liable for damages as a result of its invasion and occupation of the emirate.

— A fund is to be created for claims and a commission established to administer it. Monies to the fund would be based on a percentage of Iraq's oil revenues. References to Iraq's frozen assets abroad were deleted from the draft.

— Payment levels should take into account the needs of the Iraqi people, Iraq's economy and its foreign debt.

6. Sanctions

— The embargo on foodstuffs is removed and restrictions are eased on supplies for essential civilian needs.

— The committee may lift the embargo on specific goods Iraq needs to export in order to purchase essential supplies.

— The council is to review the embargo every 60 days.

— All sanctions on Iraqi exports are to be lifted after weapons of mass destruction are removed and a mechanism for compensation is approved by the council.

— An arms embargo is maintained, including conventional military equipment, spare parts, technology, personnel or related material for training or technical support services.

— The arms embargo is reviewed every 120 days, taking into account Iraq's compliance and general progress towards the control of armaments in the Middle East.

Human rights group says Egyptians persecuted in Kuwait

CAIRO (R) — An Egyptian human rights group said Tuesday that five Egyptians had been tortured to death in Kuwait, adding to charges of abuse in the emirate since its liberation from the Iraqi army.

Quoting Egyptian refugees, it also said Egyptians had been tortured and killed during the rebellion which broke out in southern Iraq after the end of the Gulf war a month ago.

The Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights (EOHR) called for international action to protect Egyptians and Palestinians it said were being tortured or killed in Kuwait.

The non-governmental group said in a statement the five were tortured to death at Kuwaiti police stations after the end of the war.

Their bodies, buried at the Riqa cemetery in Kuwait, were mutilated and some were without lips, ears or noses, the statement said.

"Eyewitnesses estimate that there are hundreds of Egyptians held in Kuwaiti police stations, at least 300. They were detained and tortured on the basis of unverified information," the statement said.

Kuwait has denied reports of rough justice and torture of Palestinians and other Arabs accused of collaborating with the Iraqis during the seven-month occupation.

About 150,000 Egyptians were living on Kuwait when Iraq's army stormed in last August. Most fled after the invasion.

Hundreds of thousands of Egyptians were also working in

Iraq when the Gulf crisis broke out, and the EOHR asserted those still there faced a campaign of hatred as government forces fought rebels.

It quoted Egyptians fleeing Iraq as saying dozens of their compatriots had been tortured, killed and buried in mass graves near Basra, Iraq's second largest city.

The witnesses did not know whether government troops or rebels were responsible, the EOHR said. But it said anti-Egyptian feelings were running high among Shi'ites who believed Egyptian workers supported Iraqi government.

Reporting on the situation in Kuwait, the U.S.-based group Middle East Watch said last week 30 to 40 Palestinians had been

killed and 2,000 jailed, many of them tortured, by Kuwaitis seeking revenge.

Kuwait denied Tuesday that Palestinian residents were being jailed and killed. Information Minister Badr Jassim Al Yaqoub said Kuwait applied the law equally to Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis, the Kuwaiti News Agency (KUNA) reported.

The EOHR, led by intellectuals and former officials, said its report was based on eyewitness accounts or interviews with travellers from Kuwait.

It appealed to the Egyptian government, the United Nations, the International Red Cross and international human rights groups to take action "to put an end to the sufferings of Egyptians and other Arab communities in Kuwait."

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

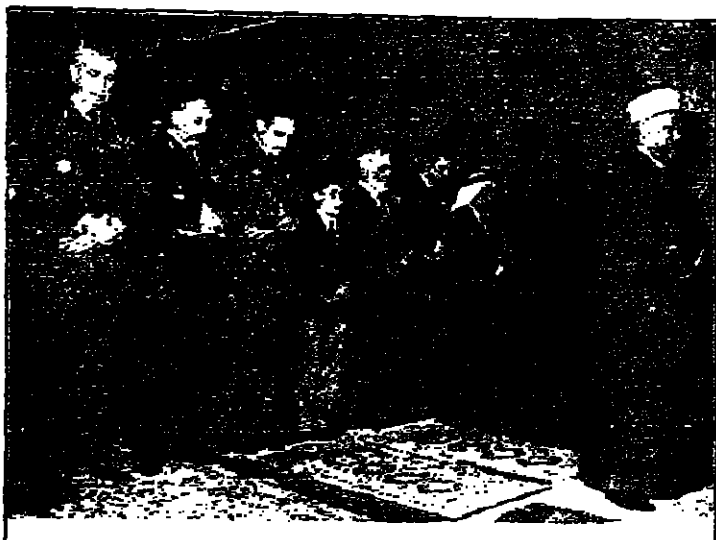
PRAYER TIMES	
06:08	Fajr
06:26	(Sunrise) Dhuhr
11:41	Dhuhr
15:11	Asr
17:56	Maghreb
19:14	Isha

CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swetith	Tel. 810740
Assembly of God Church, Tel.	636785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624990	
Church of the Annunciation Tel.	625341
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757	
Terraviva Church Tel. 622366	
Church of the Annunciation Tel.	625341
Anglican Church Tel. 625383	

WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.	
It will be relatively hot and winds will be light and variable. In Aqaba, winds will be southerly moderate and seas calm.	

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS	
AMMAN	
Dr. Abdul Hafez Khawaja	791954
Dr. Yousef Al Fagih	657909
Dr. Yousef Raheb	896301
Dr. Mohammed Al Ajam	894184

NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN	
Dr. Abdul Hafez Khawaja	791954
Dr. Yousef Al Fagih	657909
Dr. Yousef Raheb	896301



KING HOSTS IFTAR: His Majesty King Hussein Wednesday hosted an iftar banquet in honour of the senior officers of the Jordanian Armed Forces, the Public Security Department, the Civil Defence Department, the commander of the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) and several PLA senior officers. The iftar was attended by their Royal Highnesses Prince Faisal Ben Al Hussein, Prince Hamza Ben Al Hussein and Prince Talal Ben Mohammed, Prime Minister Mudar Badran, Royal Court Chief Sherif Zaid Ben Shaker, Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'ad Ben Zaid, and senior officials. King Hussein and the guests performed Al Maghreb prayers together.

Masri: N. African tour positive

RABAT (J.T.) — Foreign Minister Taber Al Masri was due in Mauritania Wednesday evening on the last leg of a tour that took him to the Arab Maghreb Union countries, which group Libya, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco and Mauritania, to deliver messages to their leaders from His Majesty King Hussein on joint Arab action in the post-war era and in preparation for the coming Arab League meeting scheduled for March 30 in Cairo.

Before going to Mauritania the minister was received in audience by King Hassan II of Morocco to whom he delivered a message from King Hussein. The message, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, dealt with the current situation in the Arab region.

In his meeting with King Hassan and in his talks with the Moroccan foreign minister, Mr. Masri discussed Arab issues that included the Palestine question, the prospects for an international conference on the Arab-Israeli conflict and the situation in Iraq, the minister said in a statement to Radio Jordan at noon Wednesday.

On the outcome of his tour of the north African Arab states, the minister said that it was positive and that these countries displayed an acute desire to contribute to a collective Arab action.

Mr. Masri said that Jordan had

been paving the way for such joint action ahead of the Cairo meeting, which will be held on Saturday at foreign ministers' level.

"There is a good degree of optimism in the Maghreb Union countries that the Arabs will now learn from their mistakes and will start joint Arab action on sound bases and with a great degree of care and open-mindedness," the minister said in his telephone conversation.

In reply to a question about the coming meeting in Cairo the minister said that there is almost a unanimous agreement among the Arab countries that the meeting should continue after the ministers' perley on Saturday so that the Arab countries can deal with all fresh political developments.

Mr. Masri said that the coming meeting could pave the ground for continued political coordination among Arab states with regard to the future.

The Cairo meeting is expected to be attended by all Arab League member states, including Iraq which Tuesday announced its readiness to attend. If so, it will be the first session of all the 21 members since Iraq invaded Kuwait last August.

Arab League Acting Secretary General Assad al Assad of Lebanon said that the Iraq's presence would mean that the meeting was important for all Arab countries.

Jordan gets \$9 m in Austrian assistance

AMMAN (J.T.) — Austria is granting Jordan \$9 million in aid to help it overcome part of the negative consequences of the Gulf war on the national economy, according to an agreement signed in Amman Wednesday.

The agreement, for a grant of 100 million Austrian shillings (equivalent to \$9 million) was signed at the Ministry of Planning by the Austrian ambassador to Jordan, Franz Pernegger, and Minister of Planning Khaled Amin Abdullah, according to an official statement by the Jordan News Agency Petra.

Petra said that the grant would help Jordan finance foreign imports provided that half of these imports come from Austrian sources. The Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) will take charge of handling the grant which, the agency said, was considered as part of Austria's assistance to the country's treasury and support for its balance of payments.

The agency said that the grant reflected excellent Jordanian Au-

strain relations and bilateral cooperation in various fields.

Austria is one of other European nations which offered Jordan financial assistance over the past few months to help the Kingdom cope with the consequences of the Gulf war that has left the national economy in tatters.

The European Community countries, along with Japan, have either made pledges or delivered substantial financial assistance to Jordan.

Japan, which has pledged \$100 million in soft loans and \$150 million under stricter loans, has agreed with Jordan on disbursement of the \$100 million package and the accord is now awaiting formal approval from Tokyo.

The planning minister, who made a trip to Japan to secure further assistance, Tuesday signed three memoranda with Germany in which Bonn pledges DM 2.3 million in technical assistance to the Kingdom's agricultural sector.

Jordan continues to get Syrian oil by sea

AQABA (J.T.) — The second sea shipment of Syrian oil, estimated at 22,000 tonnes, arrived here Wednesday aboard a Soviet oil tanker only two days after the arrival in Aqaba of a Syrian tanker laden with 44,000 tonnes of oil.

A statement by the Port Authority said that the Soviet tanker was carrying 22,000 tonnes of diesel oil which had been loaded in the port of Banias under an agreement reached by Amman and Damascus last month.

The Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company (JPRC) took delivery of the diesel oil and stored it at its storage facilities in Aqaba and JPRC near Zarqa, according to a company statement.

JPRC spokesman Mohammad Najib said that the oil tanker "Al Azraq," which was bought by Jordan two months ago at \$7.5 million, would leave the port in the coming few days for a fresh load of crude oil, probably from

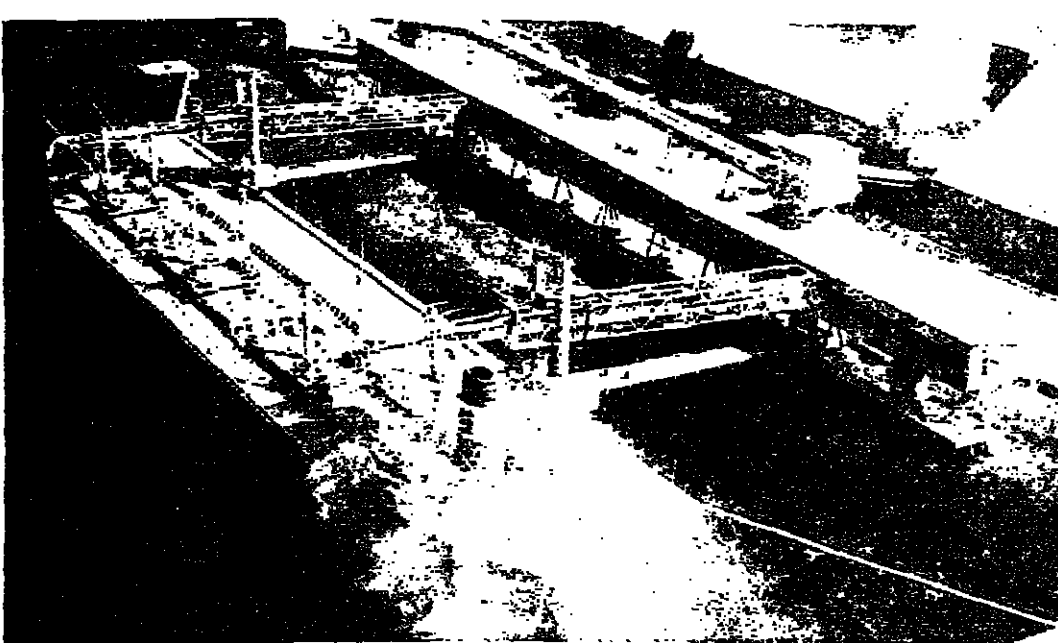
Yemen.

Jordan began importing oil from Yemen and Syria at world market rates following the outbreak of the Gulf war during which Jordanian oil tankers bringing in crude from Iraq were hit by allied bombers. The bombing resulted in the death of several drivers and the destruction of many oil tankers.

Diesel, petrol and other refined products have been arriving in Amman from Syria by road until now.

More than 90,000 tonnes of crude oil arrived in Aqaba from Yemen last month on board Al Azraq, which is now berthed in the port permanently, but the Syrian and Jordanian governments reached a separate agreement providing for Syria to supply the Kingdom with crude oil as well as oil products.

Jordanian officials had said that the Kingdom used to consume 50,000 barrels of oil daily



Loading of a ship with phosphate from the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company warehouses in Aqaba. (file photo)

Phosphate company records sharp decline in 1990 profit

By Samir Shafiq
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Gulf war and the political events in East Europe combined with tough domestic measures to increase government revenue last year plunged the Jordan Phosphate Mines Co. (JPMC) in an unprecedented negative phase of low sales and lower profit amid a general disruption of production and expansion plans.

Eastern Europe, which ranked second after Asia in terms of Jordanian phosphate purchases, bought only 580,000 tonnes in 1990 while between 1985-1989 the same buyers purchased an average of two million tonnes per year, or 33 per cent of all Jordanian phosphate exports.

The sharp drop in sales to East Europe was somehow braked by an improvement in exports to a few other traditional markets, but the end result for 1990 was an unexpected fall in raw phosphate exports, to 4.9 million tonnes from 6.4 million tonnes in 1989.

Production and exports of phosphatic fertilizers and other products from the industrial complex in Aqaba remained within the ordinary range as 612,000 tonnes of phosphatic fertilizers, 18,000 tonnes of phosphoric acid (100 per cent) and 16,000 tonnes of aluminium fluoride were exported.

According to the JPMC 1990 annual report received Tuesday, the company's net sales last year amounted to JD 232.5 million, down from 247.8 million earned in 1989.

The report showed that net profit for 1990 was only JD 41.4 million, sharply down from 1989's profit of JD 107.2 million.

However, the main foreign exchange earner for the Kingdom said that it would distribute JD 5.13 million in dividends to shareholders. The amount translates

into a 15 per cent return per JD 1 nominal value of each share.

JPMC blamed the government too for its low earnings and profitability. The company said the government had raised production fees on every tonne of phosphate to JD 5 since September 1989 before which the fee was only JD 1.

The company, according to the report, was also hurt by the rise in fuel prices started on Aug. 8, 1990 and the earlier cancellation of fuel subsidies which the government granted for exports. The report put the value of fuel subsidies in 1989 at JD 671,000.

Moreover, the government shifted its policy towards the company by imposing customs and other levies on many items that JPMC previously used to import duty-free.

JPMC's financial plight was further worsened by the rise in port fees for phosphate handling and shipping as the government decided to unify the fees as of March 1, 1990 to become JD 1.750 per tonne instead of the previous fees of JD 0.950 per tonne for the first million tonnes, JD 0.850 per tonne for the second million tonnes and JD 0.650 per tonne for the rest of the amount.

Transportation of phosphate was another area where JPMC suffered because the cost of rail shipments from the mines to the port of Aqaba was also raised by JD 0.300 per tonne starting August 1990. The company expects more problems this year because of the new ad valorem law, which took effect on Jan. 1, 1991, and which limits the maximum load of the largest truck to 50 tonnes.

The Gulf crisis widened the negative performance of the company due to the searches of vessels and the increase in insurance costs on shipping to the area. The crisis also disrupted supplies of

sulphur from Kuwait and Iraq and ammonia from Kuwait, and forced JPMC to seek supplies from Bahrain and the Soviet Union at higher costs which could not be passed to the ultimate buyers of fertilisers.

The Soviet Union was another factor in terms of competitiveness as it started supplying the Gulf market with aluminium fluoride at prices far less than those of JPMC which was forced to lower its prices noticeably to be able to compete.

The Gulf crisis, more importantly, caused planned expansion at Shidiyeh mines to be delayed resulting in additional costs on the one hand and financing problems on the other in addition to the huge investments which were put in the preliminary stages and were left idle with no way to generate income for at least a year.

The balance sheet of the company at the end of 1990 showed that JPMC's fixed assets totalled JD 155.7 million after depreciation and that investments in other local companies stood at JD 2.7 million.

Receivables, after allowing for doubtful debts, amounted to JD 74.5 million while inventories of finished products and under processing totalled JD 41.4 million.

According to the annual report, JPMC's total short-term and long-term debt stood at JD 52.1 million as of Dec. 31, 1990. Salaries and other benefits to employees rose to JD 24.7 million from JD 21.5 million in 1989.

The report concluded that the company had paid to the treasury and other government institutions a total of JD 73 million in various taxes, fees, dividends and rent.

The capital of JPMC stands at JD 34.2 million and total shareholders' equity is JD 157.9 million.

Fabius: France respects all U.N. Security Council resolutions on Mideast

AMMAN (J.T.) — Speaker of the French National Assembly Laurent Fabius met here Wednesday with Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Abdul Latif Arabiyat and told him that France respected all U.N. Security Council resolutions on various Middle East problems, including those related to the Palestine question.

Mr. Fabius, who paid a one-day working visit here following his arrival from the occupied territories, said that France would play a role at all levels to find solutions for the region's problems because it maintains very strong ties with the Arab World.

"France has repeatedly called for the convening of an international Middle East conference because it is an important meeting that would help solve the Arab-Israeli conflict and end the Palestine problem," Mr. Fabius said.

The former French Prime Minister called for the establish-

ment of justice and the equitable distribution of economic wealth as well as water and oil, and for the solution of all problems plaguing the region.

Mr. Arabiyat, for his part, emphasised Jordan's role in the ongoing endeavour to find a just solution for the Middle East issues.

With reference to the Gulf war, Mr. Arabiyat said that the aggression on Iraq was not directed towards liberating Kuwait but the destruction of Iraq. He called for the implementation of the international legitimacy with regard to all issues, on equal terms, and based on the same criteria.

Mr. Arabiyat said Jordan expected France to play a leading role in solving the region's issue in view of France's long-standing ties with the Arab World.

Mr. Fabius, who left Amman at the end of the visit, said in an airport statement that his country was concerned about supporting

all moves to develop the economy of the Middle Eastern countries in the wake of the Gulf war in a bid to promote the cause of peace and to solve the Palestine issue.

Asked on the Israeli government's rejection of the idea of an international conference and the implementation of U.N. resolutions on the Palestine problem, Mr. Fabius said: "If we want to reach agreement on solving the problems of the region we have to ensure international support one way or another and we should be realistic and open-minded about the achievement of peace."

"While France is committed to Israel's security, it is also committed to supporting the right of the Palestinians to a state of their own," Mr. Fabius added.

Minister of Information Ibrahim Izzeddin, who also met and held talks with the French official, and other officials were at the airport to meet Mr. Fabius and to see him off.



Minister of Information Ibrahim Izzeddin Wednesday receives Speaker of the French National Assembly Laurent Fabius (Petra photo)

Japan donates \$11 m worth of emergency food to Palestinians

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government of Japan decided to make a contribution of 1,370 million yen (equivalent to \$11 million) from its reserve fund to United Nations Relief and Works Agency's (UNRWA's) Emergency Food Distribution Programme for the Palestinians living in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, according to a press release from the Japanese embassy in Amman.

The economy and food situation of the Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip

have deteriorated because of the reduction of income from expatriates in the Gulf region as a result of the Gulf crisis, the decrease in economic assistance from the nations in the Gulf region, and the curfew imposed by the Israeli authorities in the occupied territories.

UNRWA started an Emergency Food Distribution Programme for 295,000 households of Palestinians residing in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (about 170,000 people) for the duration

of three months mid-January this year, with a view to solving malnutrition among these Palestinians. And in March, it requested from various countries, including Japan, donations toward the sum of about \$33 million needed to implement the programme.

In response, the government of Japan decided to extend an emergency aid of \$11 million. The amount of the Japanese donation is the largest as a donation from a single country.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Arabiyyat opens souq Ramadan

AMMAN (Petra) — Lower House of Parliament Speaker Abdul Latif Arabiyat Tuesday opened Ramadan commercial souq at Amman International Automobile Fair. Taking part in the souq, which is held for the third consecutive year in Ramadan, are 120 companies which will be displaying clothes, electric equipment, carpets, ornaments, perfumes, home appliances, furniture, food stuff, books and many other products. The souq will be open for the public for 20 days.

ACC secretariat optimistic about Cairo talks

AMMAN (Petra) — The Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) General Secretariat Wednesday issued a statement here in which it voiced optimism about the meeting of the Arab League Council which will be held Saturday in Cairo in the presence of all Arab foreign ministers. The statement said the meeting would be a step forward towards unifying the ranks of the Arab Nation. The secretariat expressed hope that the council adopts urgent resolutions on issues related to the Gulf crisis, particularly resolutions affirming the integrity of the Iraqi land and denouncing all partition attempts. The statement also called for rejecting all efforts attempting to impose new conditions on Iraq.

UNRWA opens health centre

AMMAN (Petra) — The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) has opened a new mother and child health care centre in Al Wadwat refugee camp in Amman. The centre, whose construction costs of about \$150,000 were contributed by the Canadian government, started offering its services to mothers and children in the camp. The centre will be assisting the main medical clinic in the camp which also provides mother and child medical services.

Committee to do relief work in Iraq

AMMAN (Petra) — The Hashemite Jordanian Committee for Relief, Development and Arab-Islamic Cooperation has started preparing for launching relief operations in one of the areas affected by the war in Iraq. The relief operation will include sending specialised medical teams to operate a hospital and vaccinate Iraqi citizens. The committee is also planning to send technicians and engineers to help in reconstruction and renovation works.

People's Army recruits graduate

AMMAN (Petra) — Two batches of People's Army recruits graduated Wednesday in Maan Governorate. The graduation ceremony included a show of skills acquired by the graduates during the training courses. Another batch of People's Army recruits graduated Wednesday at Sahab Industrial Estate.



Roads, bridges, walls, water canals and electricity networks have been damaged by the torrential rains and the floods that affected mostly the southern parts of the Kingdom (Petra photo)



Cabinet to be informed on damages in the south

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Public Works and Housing Abdul Ra'ouf Al Rawabdeh was among a group of Jordanian officials, governors and district governors who Wednesday toured areas, in southern Jordan, affected by the recent rain that has left a trail of destruction in its wake.

The minister was directed by the Cabinet to make the tour and to report to the Cabinet on the extent of damages and the requirements to restore normal life.

Acting Tafleeh Governor Khaled Bawaliz was quoted as saying that 70 per cent of the main and side roads were damaged by the storm, that eight bridges were destroyed and 25 retaining walls were cracked within the governorate.

He said that 70 houses and 10 stores had been totally devastated and thousands of heads of sheep and goats and large areas of crops were washed away by the floods.

Apart from this, large sections of water canals and electricity networks have been destroyed by the landslides which occurred as a result of the torrential rain and the floods.

He said that almost 3,000 fruit and olive trees had been uprooted and tonnes of rocks and mud were carried over large areas of roads, farm lands and fields.

Mr. Bawaliz Wednesday toured Basra, Zaidieh, Al Ain Al Baida and Al Laaban to inspect the affected regions and assess the damages to the public and private property and the water, electricity and road networks.

According to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Mr. Bawaliz set up committees in each area to assess the damages and to supervise repair work as soon as possible. He said that due to the disruption of water systems, the Water Authority is now supplying the population with drinking wa-

ter by trucks.

Tafleeh, an area believed to be the worst affected by the storm, was also inspected by Mutazz Al Bilbeisi, Ministry of Water and Irrigation secretary general, who said that emergency teams were at work around the clock to repair the damaged water networks.

Mr. Bawaliz and other local officials accompanied Mr. Bilbeisi on the tour.

In Aqaba, Governor Qasem Gharaibeh toured affected areas around the city and visited Wadi Araba to estimate the extent of damages resulting from the storm. He told Petra that the landslides had disrupted road communications between Karak and Aqaba over the past three days, preventing trucks from reaching the port to pick up goods for Amman and other destinations.

According to Mr. Gharaibeh, a special committee to follow up maintenance on the roads was

taking charge of its duties.

Two bodies, out of the eight people who died in the storm and the floods, were Tuesday found in the Tafleeh region. They are those of Safi Naji from Basireh and of a seven year old boy, Suleiman Safi.

A spokesman for the Arab Potash Company (APC) announced in Aqaba that the first shipment of potash from the APC plants near the southern tip of the Dead Sea has arrived in the port after a three-day delay during which road communications were disrupted with the port city.

APC spokesman Nasser Al Saadoun, who is also director of the APC plant, said that the delay did not affect the exports operations since the company has good stores for the potash in its warehouses in Aqaba.

According to Saadoun, the APC exported 300,000 tonnes of potash since the beginning of 1991, a normal rate as compared to previous years.

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Draft should be aborted

THE U.S. has submitted a draft resolution to the U.N. Security Council demanding that Iraq pay reparations estimated at tens, probably hundreds, of billions of dollars and accept the destruction of its ballistic missile systems and weapons of mass destruction in return for the removal of U.N. sanctions against Baghdad. The draft resolution, whose legal aspects and political implications are clearly questionable and controversial, also demands that Iraq accept the demarcation of border with Kuwait as it was prior to Aug. 2.

As Iraqi forces are totally out of Kuwait, and Baghdad has accepted all Security Council resolutions pertaining to the Kuwaiti issue, you would think that the U.N. mandate given to the United States and its allies to implement council resolutions has formally ended. But unfortunately this seems to be nowhere near the case here.

In accordance with the rules of the International Court of Justice in the Hague, a nation that causes damages to another as a result of war activity should pay reparations. The court rules that compensation should be paid if the aggressor has committed actions considered as war crimes like the destruction of private and public property and villages and cities of the other country. Since it can be argued that it was the United States and its Western allies that wrought such destruction on Iraq, the matter should be left to the Hague court to rule on the issue of reparations.

With regard to the question of destroying Iraq's weapons, we can only see an outright interference in Iraq's internal affairs and a means to deprive the Arab country of the only means to defend itself (against countries bigger and more ambitious than Kuwait of course) at a time when the whole world realizes that the Iraqis refrained from using any weapons of mass destruction during their defensive operations, if only because the other side did not.

Following World War II, the victorious powers chose not to impose any harsh and humiliating measures on defeated Japan, Germany or Italy similar to those imposed after World War I, so as not to recreate conditions similar to those that led to the emergence of Nazi Germany, which consequently resulted in World War II. If Iraq is proved by the Court of Justice not to have committed war crimes, how can the United States and its allies make assumptions in advance and introduce, through the Security Council, harsh measures which indeed should be applied against those who carried out crimes against humanity and the civilian population of Iraq?

Again, since the war in the Gulf was caused largely by a border dispute between Iraq and its neighbour, the Security Council has no jurisdiction under the U.N. charter to impose on Iraq or Kuwait a demarcation of their common border. As long as a dispute over territory exists, the International Court of Justice is the only world body that is empowered to settle such dispute. Besides, U.N. Resolution 660 calls for negotiations between Iraq and Kuwait to settle this and other disputes plugging them.

Unless the international community realises these facts, and takes steps to act on them fairly and impartially, the world will witness a precedent that would not augur well for future international relations. The draft resolution that was submitted by the U.S. to the Security Council is neither fair nor just, and as such it should be aborted.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily Wednesday warned that the ongoing U.S. aggression on Iraq will sooner or later be directed against the other Arab states because it is in the interest of the world Zionism to see a weak and divided Arab World. The paper said if the present experiment being tried in Iraq was successful, the Americans and their allies would not hesitate to apply on any other Arab country at any time in the future. But the paper said the American plans greatly depend on the continued weakness in Arab ranks, which is the best guarantee for Zionism to exist, and to impose its influence and its hegemony on the whole Arab region. Zionism has no doubt played a key role in arranging for America's aggression on Iraq, and it is Zionism that is now influencing the U.S. administration into maintaining its forces in southern Iraq and keeping that Arab country embroiled in its own internal affairs, the paper continued. The Arab countries should realise that U.S.-Zionist hegemony on Arab wealth and Arab states can be by no means be achieved except by keeping the Arabs weak and in disarray, and by keeping Israel stronger militarily than the whole Arab Nation put together, the paper warned. It said that Arab leaders and masses should understand that they are all targeted, and Iraq is only one facet of the colonial powers' objectives. The paper said that the ongoing conspiracy on Iraq is directed against all Arabs and Muslims, and it is best for us to realise this fact before it is too late.

A columnist in Al Ra'i daily demands that the Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications take all necessary measures to collect JD 6 million in dues from 1,071 subscribers whose telephone lines have now been disconnected. Salah Abdul Samad says that the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) enjoys full public support for its endeavours to collect the overdue from those subscribers who have succeeded for so long to escape payment while at the same time enjoying the convenience of maintaining their telephone service uninterrupted. But the ministry is called on now to conduct a thorough investigation into the matter and to find out how a group of subscribers escaped penalty all these years until the TCC has finally taken the decision to disconnect their telephones, the writer demands. He says that the huge sum which is still uncollected means that each of the subscribers owes an average of JD 6,000 in dues to the TCC, and one can only believe that those subscribers must have had very wide influence in the government that prevented any legal measure to date to be taken against them.

Gulf war's aftermath leaves Europe down in the dumps

By Claire Tréan

EUROPEAN Commission President Jacques Delors spoke in London on March 7 on the highly sensitive subject of European defence and broke a quite uncharacteristic silence which he had observed since November when the U.N. Security Council adopted Resolution 678 authorising the use of force against Iraq. But as he pointed out himself, he still intended to keep his powder dry. The address [at the Institute of Strategic Studies] was meant to be a signal, not one of those offensives by which the EC president has succeeded in moving mountains when necessary. The crisis in Europe has not come to an end with the ceasefire in the Gulf. Work on building the Community has stalled and Jacques Delors is not claiming it is again under way.

The Gulf crisis has dealt the EC's 12 member-states a bitter blow. The oil issue was the same for them and the political stakes roughly identical, but all they managed to do was parade their (political) divisions while the United States dispatched its divisions to the Middle East. This ironic truth sends Europe back to the one fact which two years of Community euphoria had helped to obscure: at the present stage in its history, Europe has neither the instruments of a common foreign policy nor the means of collective military intervention.

Logic should dictate taking urgent measures to remedy Europe's shortcomings so cruelly exposed. But — and this accounts for the bewilderment noticeable at the Brussels Commission — logic is not on the agenda right now. The countries that were physically committed to the fighting are more concerned with postwar psychology and politics, which for the moment have little or nothing to do with the community.

Nobody today proclaims the European will. The EC's role in the "new world order" has not even been raised.

The most glaring illustration of this trough in European history was given by President François Mitterrand when, in his most recent televised comment on the war, he failed to pronounce the word which had constantly been on his lips since 1981.

Is this a major change of tack? Probably not. Buoyed by soaring opinion polls, Mitterrand is quite simply taking advantage of his popularity. Brussels believes he will come back to Europe, but later. After such a strong demonstration of presidential power, after so powerful a national assertion as the entry into war, he is starting to collect the dividends. He does not want to jeopardise them by prematurely initiating a debate on the European issue which is all the less opportune as

it now directly affects national sovereignty. The public clearly does not for one moment regret that Mitterrand has played this personal game, any more than it deplors Europe's shortcomings. It is French fact, and even more so a British fact, that Brussels is not trying to ignore.

Another consequence of the war, another way of capitalising on the war effort is the quiet tussle now going on between Paris, London and Bonn. The time has come for avenging German unity. France and Britain both fear their neighbour's supremacy; they have taken risks that Germany did not take and they are quite happy to see that Bonn's principal role appears to be shaping up as the "world's banker."

Such a windfall cannot be passed up: guarantees are secured, attempts are made to alter the balance of power in the European theatre and so inevitably relations become strained. "France, Britain and Germany are irreconcilable right now," is the Brussels Commission comment on the issue of the two major projects in the construction of Europe — economic and monetary union and political union. Though he has been in similar difficulties before and is himself having to bear the brunt of the tense situation, Delors apparently has no intention of becoming involved.

'Europe will be Europe' insisted Delors. In other words, the proposed political union is an assertion of Europe's autonomy in the face of the United States; it is incompatible with the acceptance of American leadership.

Yet he has just spoken out on one subject — European defence — that he could not have raised a year ago without risking excommunication. The fact that he has is because Chancellor Helmut Kohl and President Mitterrand lifted the taboo with the joint initiative they took last December (right in the middle of the Gulf crisis), which was reactivated by Roland Dumas and Hans Dietrich Genscher, foreign ministers respectively of France and Germany) amid public indifference in February (at the height of the Gulf war).

Nothing is simple in the European Community, and especially not the impression deliberately created by Mitterrand several times in recent months that he was prepared to kiss Europe goodbye. The least European of his public addresses — the last — moreover contained an indication

which is thought to imply that the president is keeping several irons in the fire. This was his brief reference to protecting national territory and the "contribution to Europe's defence," as well as the announcement that French army structures would be reviewed before the end of the year.

There are some in Brussels who expect much from it. "We can't confine ourselves to a de-



Jacques Delors

bate on the advantages and drawbacks of conscription and a professional army. A debate on defence has to be a debate on sovereignty, foreign policy and France's role," said a Brussels Commission official. In short, a debate on European integration and Europe's role in NATO.

Will such a debate really take place? That will depend on the state of inter-European and Franco-American relations when the time comes. Delors fired the opening shot when he included in the agenda of intergovernmental discussions on political union a draft plan for revising the Treaty of Rome bearing on foreign policy and security which he presented at his address in London on March 7. Apart from the specific proposals that it contained, his speech was dictated by a few preoccupations which also reflect the effects of the Gulf war.

The Commission president laid strong emphasis on the "oneness" of the European project, on its global and indivisible nature. He said the various (social, economic, political, diplomatic and potentially security-enhancing) aspects of Community construction became bonded together in response to changes taking place in Eastern Europe. There was no gap between the Community's internal operation and the Twelve's ability to react collectively outside. All this arose from the same dynamism. The Gulf war has had a disintegrating effect and Delors warned against attempts to break up the project by those advocating "the establishment of several communities,

one based on economic integration, another on political cooperation and a third for taking care of security."

"Europe must be European," insisted Delors, putting another of his preoccupations into a tautological form that in fact said less than he thought. In other words, the proposed political union is, among other things, an assertion of Europe's autonomy in the face of the United States; it is incompatible with the acceptance of American leadership.

Here, recent events are less favourable to Europe. As a European, and as a Frenchman in the most recent period, Delors must have viewed them with disfavour even if some of his aides in all probability take a more balanced view of Mitterrand's attitude. In the view of one of them, it is a sort of repeat of his 1983 Bundestag address, that is a crucial assertion of solidarity that will later give the French president the right to have a say and even to differ.

Nevertheless, the crisis has strengthened the convictions of the more pro-American Europeans who will make their views heard in the debate on postwar developments in the Middle East as well as in the discussions on European defence.

The crisis will have also revealed just how remote such defence concerns are in certain sections of public opinion — especially in Germany and Spain — and how little inclined they are to consider the question of their security today and what they are prepared to pay for it. In this respect Delors's London speech was meant to signal the start of an effort to bring these matters to public attention — an effort that will be difficult and a long haul.

Finally, the crisis will have hastened a certain change in the Commission's and its president's political status, but that is something Delors could not have said. With the European project becoming confused and Europe once again having to spell out its ambitions, Delors can no longer claim to do the job for it. Not only because the post-war situation does not lend itself to that sort of thing, but also because Community construction has reached a point where it directly affects national sovereignties. Even without a war to exacerbate them, states in any case are loath to give way to supranational institutions.

Jacques Delors noted pessimistically that if Tocqueville were alive today he would be able to illustrate his analyses by pointing to "the public opinion phenomena linked to the media, the tendency to fall back on oneself and the difficulty or breathing life into a grand design produced by a genuine civic consciousness" — *Le Monde*.

LETTERS

Clarifying the role

Dear Sir,

With reference to an article published on 24/3/91 regarding help for repatriates, I would like to briefly reassess the UNHCR's role within the U.N. emergency plan of operations for the Gulf crisis. First of all, the U.N. emergency regional humanitarian plan of action relating to the crisis between Iraq and Kuwait has assigned to UNHCR the role of camp management irrespective of the status of persons staying in camps, in addition to UNHCR's traditional role of protection and assistance to refugees, stricto sensu.

Refugees who were staying in Azraq I camp, among them, Somali refugees, have been assisted in terms of food, accommodation, health, water and sanitation by the Jordanian Red Crescent, the League of Red Crescent and Red Cross Societies and UNHCR.

Refugees who have been accommodated in hotels in Amman have been directly taken care of by UNHCR in terms of lodgings while food was provided as appropriate. Presently each refugee family is getting on average per month 225 loaves of bread, 27 kgs of rice, 10 kgs of sugar, three litres of edible oil, one kg of cheese, 2.5 kgs of fish (sardine or tuna), 1.5 kgs of powder milk and eight kgs of spaghetti. In addition, fresh vegetables are regularly provided.

From the onset of the Gulf crisis, the government of Jordan has clearly stated that it could not afford to authorise the settlement in the country of any new category of asylum seeker or refugee. Therefore, UNHCR is assisting refugees to resettle in third countries of asylum or, whenever possible, facilitating the repatriation to their home countries. In this context, UNHCR is planning to repatriate some 160 Somali refugees to northern Somalia if and when security conditions there allow it.

I hope that this clarifies UNHCR's role and responsibilities.

Marwan El Khoury
Liaison Officer
UNHCR, Amman.

More action, less talk

To the Editor:

PROMISES are being given, presidents are declaring that it is high time to pull the Palestinian issue out of its state of inertia. Hope is held by some parties, while scepticism controls others.

Here in Jordan, people seem to belong to the second category. Most people appear to be sceptical: no doubt, people in Jordan have learnt from previous experiences enough to make their motto: "Actions speak louder than words." And while we heard President Bush's prodigious words about the possibility of the implementation of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 concerning Palestine, we're still waiting for his prodigious action.

To a certain degree, however, he is acting. His relationship with the Gulf states has never been better. What he is actually doing right now is allowing the Arabs to see one side of the coin, that is, giving promises, trying to sound as much sincere as possible in his intention to solve the Palestinian issue, and endeavours to convince his pliable Arabs that heavy American weapons in the region are a necessity, otherwise, they are going to witness the birth of another Saddam.

Because they haven't seen the other side of the coin, the poor Arabs are complacent. They think that the United States is serious this time in exerting all efforts to solve not only the Palestinian question, but also the Arab-Israeli conflict.

But let's not be taken twice in the same snare. The United States has proved adept in penetrating the minds of the Arabs through honeyed words and the cover of international legitimacy. Where has been America's international legitimacy twenty five years ago when Palestine was, and still is, occupied by Israel? It is noteworthy that the cover of international legitimacy under which the United States moves has spouted suddenly with the eruption of the Gulf crisis and the annexation of Kuwait by Iraq. Before that, however, it has been kidnapped in order to guarantee the safety of America's strategic ally, Israel. Now, President Bush has to keep some credibility in front of the Arabs who stood beside him in the Gulf war; therefore, he delivered that tremendous speech and sent his secretary of state, James Baker, to do the "bla bla."

Nevertheless, if there is any fairness in this international legitimacy claimed by the United States, then action should be taken against Israel as strenuously as that which has been taken against Iraq.

Nobody is so naive, though, as to believe that any such action could be taken against Israel. We've finally learnt that Israel is America and America is Israel. Still, it is in the hands of the United States to annul this by doing some action in favour of the Palestinians and Arabs, otherwise, the region will continue to be an active volcano.

Rana Abdel Rahim
Amman.

Good wishes

To The Editor:

I write as an American saddened by the rift between the United States and Jordan. As an American, I disapprove of the support given Saddam Hussein during the recent war, but I believe I understand the reasons and do not argue with them.

I argue instead with the support of Saddam Hussein as a person. I know that Americans do not understand the problems, attitudes, cultures and beliefs of the Middle East, but I also know that all human beings know the difference between good and evil. As badly as Americans have behaved towards the Arab World, with too much solicitude for Israel, they have never, in my view, displayed the type of undiluted evil for which Saddam Hussein has become known.

I firmly believe the problem of the Palestinians has too long been ignored, and that the Palestinians and the Arabs need a hero. I also believe that both deserve much better heroes than they have had in the past several years.

I ardently hope that another will come soon, one who cares more for people than for power, more for the dignity of his followers than for self-aggrandisement, and more for the well-being of all in the Middle East than for that of his followers at the cost of all others.

Some of us still wish the Jordanians well, as do I.

Roy M. Coughlin
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North Haven, CT 06473
USA

Wind of change blows through Africa

By Michael Roddy
Reuters

ABIDJAN — The arrest of Mali's president by his own soldiers and a dramatic election defeat for Benin's head of state have underlined the breathtaking pace of political change in Africa.

The speed of reform on a continent once commanded by strong-arm dictators and one-party states has come to rival that of eastern Europe in 1989. Some of Africa's longest-reigning "big men" — in Togo, Benin, Ivory Coast and Gabon — have been forced to accept democratic reforms.

When they don't act quickly enough — as Mali's president of 22 years, Moussa Traore, learned the hard way on Tuesday — they can get thrown out by soldiers supposedly under their command.

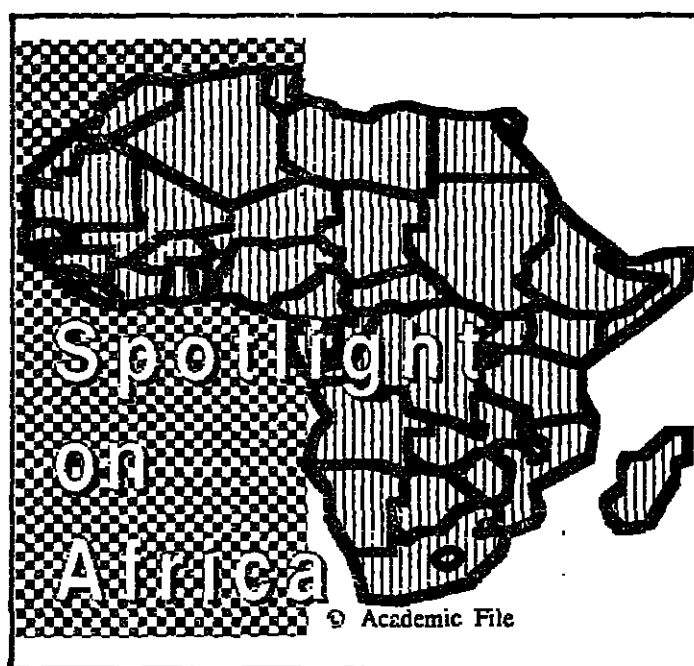
"This is a profound political revolution that is taking place, the most important since the end of the colonial era," one western diplomat said. "We may be too close to it to see it in its entirety."

Born of decades of dissent being stifled and one-party government using their privileged positions to raid public treasuries, opposition movements in Africa are flourishing.

Almost a dozen countries where "opposition" used to be a dirty word have come to terms with demands for political pluralism, freedom of speech and freedom of the press.

When the demands are met with some degree of grace, as they were in Ivory Coast and Gabon, those that hold the reins of power discover they can hold on to them.

Ivory Coast's President Felix Houphouët-Boigny, at 85 the



doyen of African leaders, easily defeated his first challenger for the presidency, history lecturer Laurent Gbagbo, last October.

Gabonese President Omar Bongo's ruling party took the lead in multi-party parliamentary elections last September.

In other countries, the process has been more painful. Togo's President Gnassingbe Eyadema agreed to pro-democracy reforms only after riots swept his country this month, resulting in the deaths of a policeman and a 12-year-old boy.

The former private in France's colonial army, who took power in a 1967 coup, quickly agreed to convene a national political conference, grant an amnesty to dissidents and speed progress towards multi-party rule.

Much the same scenario seemed to be playing out in Mali, but the killing got out of hand. The military, which Traore had sent out to fire at pro-democracy demonstrators, killed 150 people according to opposition sources and diplomats, before turning on Traore himself and placing the president and his wife under arrest.

Broadcast announcements from a newly-formed military ruling council said it would meet and cooperate with leaders of the pro-democracy protests.

The cradle of Africa's pro-democracy movement is Benin, a former French colony whose two million voters on March 23 did something unprecedented: They voted out an incumbent mainland African leader.

Mathieu Kerekou, a hard-line

Marxist whose economic and social policies bankrupted his country and stifled dissent, was forced to abandon Marxism last year in the face of massive protests and to turn over the country to a transitional government.

The circle was completed on March 23 when Kerekou, who showed surprising strength in first-round elections on March 10, was overwhelmingly defeated by his interim prime minister, former World Bank economist Nicéphore Soglo.

"Benin started it (the rush to democracy) and has become its reference point," Ismael Soumano, director of the Gazette du Golfe newspaper in Benin's principal city Cotonou, told Reuters.

"The wind of change is blowing through Africa," added an African diplomat in Cotonou. "It will sweep aside leaders who do not act fast enough to introduce democratic changes."

While some small African countries have adapted with amazing speed, the big nations of the region like Zaïre and Nigeria are having a harder time.

Zaïre, whose President Mobutu Sese Seko last year announced a transition to multi-party politics, now has some 60 legalised parties and is in the grip of political and economic turmoil.

Nigeria, black Africa's most populous country with more than 100 million people, has a head start on some of its neighbours. It has had civilian, elected governments in the past, but is still groping its way towards a fresh experiment with democracy.

Civilian rule after independence from Britain in 1960 ended in a 1966 coup. A second experiment with democracy in 1979-83 ended the same way amid charges of widespread corruption and the squandering of cash earned from Nigeria's vast oilfields.

Unlikely winner from Gulf crisis

By Debbie Lovatt
Special to the Jordan Times
AMMAN — Scuds landed in Jordan when Al Afghani antique shop chain went into

production of replicas of the missiles to mark the historic occasion and to make up for business lost as a result of the Gulf crisis.

The downtown shop is cluttered

with traditional artifacts typical of the region now hidden by a gaudy display of Scud pins, car rings, key chains and wooden replicas, as well as other Gulf crisis souvenirs.

Buttons and T-shirts have emblems written in English rather than Arabic to cater for the foreign press corps who were the main patrons of the shop throughout the Gulf war period.

Fuad Al Afghani is the general manager of the chain and is the grandson of Abdul Hamid Al Afghani who died in 1954 at the age of 108. Abdul Hamid left Afghanistan in 1862 and for religious reasons went to the Hijaz region of present-day Saudi Arabia. In 1870 Abdul Hamid went to Palestine.

"My grandfather always traded in antiques. He was a craftsman too and was especially good at setting stones in jewellery he had made," said Fuad whilst rummaging under the counter for a box of fine silverware made by Abdul Hamid. Through a magnifying glass it was possible to make out the words on the back of the pieces "Made in Palestine."

Little is known of Abdul Hamid's business activities in the Hijaz, but Fuad was able

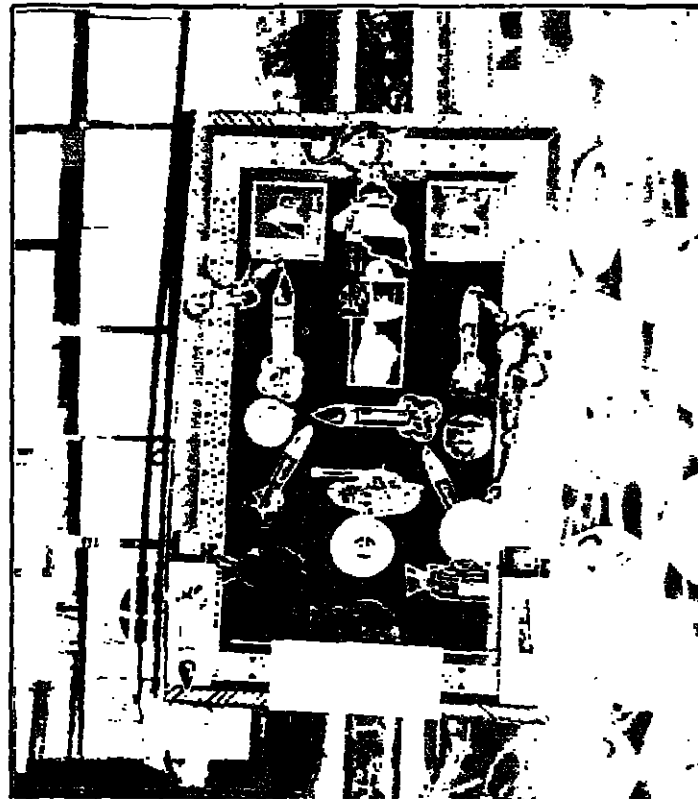
to recount tales his father, Ahmad, had told him.

Fuad began: "My father, Ahmad, was one of three brothers who all worked with my grandfather. The first shop was opened in 1934 in Jaffa. The shop was burnt down in 1936 by Jewish immigrants and they burnt it down again in 1944." Philosophically, Fuad added, "When you have good business you always have problems."

Fuad was born in Jaffa in 1947, one year before the family left Palestine for Jordan. "When we left we expected we would soon be back. We were told we would be able to return to Palestine in six months but it was just talk. We only brought things from the shop to keep us going for that short time," said Fuad.

"I used to come to the shop when I was young — I remember it very well. I started working here in this shop when I was seven," said Fuad recalling the days of the British mandate and the Arabisation of the army by His Majesty King Hussein.

With his head down remembering the reason he came to take over the business, Fuad said, "When I was older I went to Yugoslavia where I worked as a press photographer. I came back in 1974 because my father was



Scuds, tanks, TV camera replicas and pro-Iraq buttons on display at Al Afghani shop.

ill. He died that same year."

Fuad has two brothers, "one works in a bank and one helps me here, but I have many cousins to help me. We are a very close family and everyone helps. We all live together still in the same building, but now we're getting too big so some had to move — they still live close by," laughed the manager.

After Iraq's invasion of Kuwait the Afghani business lost 80 per cent of its usual trade due to the drop in tourism and purchasing power

of locals. The income from the Scuds, however, just about covered expenses during the five-month crisis period but without profit.

"It was good that we found something to cover ourselves with, others had nothing," said Fuad, adding: "Do you know what the shopkeeper next door says?" He chuckled and said smiling: "He says there were three winners in this war — (American President George) Bush, Kuwait and Al Afghani."

Weekender's one year old

The Weekender is one year old today. We celebrate its first anniversary with words and more words.

When it first came out the Weekender filled a need: to add a section of lively and informative features and articles to the Jordan Times in each of its weekend editions. Today that need is largely met, but the job is not finished yet. The original idea was to make an extra contribution towards understanding and analysing issues and trends in our Jordanian society, and certainly in the world around us. While, we admit, we succeeded more in covering the latter at the expense of the former, the Weekender nevertheless will be striving to reach a balance again. Unfortunately, what did not help us in the task of looking deeper into our local issues in the first year was the eruption of Gulf crisis and the war that followed — events that literally dominated everything else over the past eight months.

We shall be attempting to improve on last year's performance. We are fully aware that our readers expect that from us. And we plead for their continued understanding, support and any contribution they may be able to make towards achieving that goal.

Ara Voskian, the Weekender's editor, looks forward to receiving your opinions and comments on how articles and features and layout can be oriented to serve your interests and needs.

It is not always easy to do a good job, given the restraints that most of us face in doing our work. But the intention to try is there, and we hope that circumstances will allow us to improve on what we have been able to offer so far.

The Weekender must head takes on a different look today. We plan further, more substantive progress for the year ahead.

The Editor

Lazy Australians look on as their waistlines expand

By Michael Perry
Reuters

SYDNEY — The muscular, bronzed Australian male and his nubile, bikini-clad companion are endangered species.

As Australia becomes more affluent, its people are changing shape.

A visit to Bondi Beach today reveals that the typical Aussie Adonis resembles a beach ball, his Venus often looks more like a beached whale in her undersized swimsuit.

"The image of the fit, healthy, suntanned Australian has been based on a slim period of history — the fifties — and it can no longer be supported," said Garry Egger, head of the Centre for Health Promotion and Research.

"People are not eating any more (food) but because of technology and mechanisation they are exercising a lot less and are getting fatter."

he said.

"Men are genetically predisposed to putting weight on at the waist and women around the hips, so we now have a nation of apples and pears."

The National Heart Foundation says 60 per cent of Australian men and 50 per cent of women over the age of 35 are overweight or obese, as are one quarter of children under 16.

Medical researchers say Australians have achieved their rotundity by putting on two or three extra kilos since the 1960s without a corresponding increase in height.

The ballooning of Australians has been mirrored in the country's changing fashion trends.

Australian fashion houses, which once stopped their lines at size 12 for women, now stock more and more sizes 14 and 16. A size 12 label is now actually a size and a half bigger than it was, but manufacturers still call it

a size 12.

Berlei, one of the country's largest corset manufacturers, says its average size brassiere is now a 14C compared with 12B seven years ago and it is selling more D and double D bras to accommodate the bustier Australian woman.

The average trouser waist for men has increased from 87 cm (34 inches) to 90-93 cm (35-37 inches), according to men's clothing store Fletcher Jones.

"If you look at fashion magazines now the emphasis is more on the bustline — in the 1970s and 1980s it was on the bottom," said Jane De Tella, former fashion curator at Sydney's Powerhouse Museum. "This may be because the bottom isn't so beautiful any more."

"We have seen the adaptation of big is beautiful. People are now allowing their figures to be larger. The idealised human form is now bigger than it was previously."

Egger says the advertising industry's image of Australia as a nation of fitness fanatics who jog along the beach at dawn or perform aerobics before breakfast is a fallacy.

"The reality is a complete contradiction," said Egger.

"Only 15 per cent of the population exercises at an aerobic rate that would give them any benefit — generally that means exercising three times a week for half an hour at a heart rate of 120 to 130 per minute. And only one per cent of that 15 per cent is actually involved in heavy exercise."

A National Heart Foundation study in 1990 found more than a quarter of Australian men and women took no exercise.

Egger says that although Australians have gained more leisure time, their activities are now more passive.

"Our grandparents were simply a lot more active in their everyday lives," he said.

The last straw

By E. Yaghi

Musa pulled Rana's hair, then held her by her neck and threw her on the ground. After pinning his 1st wife down, cheered by wife number two, he slapped her face with a heavy hand and screamed, "You're divorced, divorced!"

He left Rana discarded outside their house on the brittle dry ground and stormed triumphantly back up to his own apartment beaming pride as wife number two accompanied him, her infant son defiantly tucked under her arm. "She really deserved that you know. She's been asking for trouble for a long time. Imagine, she's been back from America for only a few days and she can't resist a fight. But you showed her! Even if the straw mat was hers, it's good you didn't give it back to her!" Wife number two declared as she rushed into the room behind her husband and slammed the iron door shut.

At first, Rana lay stunned on the ground. Then in a craze, she scrambled up, ripped the scarf off her gray tangled hair and let out a loud wail. Her scream punctured the contrasted contented silence of the suburban neighbourhood and some passersby stopped in their paths when they heard her disturbing sound. "I'll get even with him. He can't do this to me," she cried to her unseen audience. "I lost all my strength serving him, all my youth and now when I'm old and he's got another wife, he treats me like dirt!"

Furiously, she grabbed the contested straw mat that had initiated the battle between her and her husband. In haste, she bundled it in a large ball and ran under a group of trees on their land where she threw it on the ground. Wildly, she then scurried back to her own apartment and came out with a heater madly clutched in her arms. She took the cap off the tank of the heater and sprinkled kerosene on the mat. She fumbled for a match and after striking the matchbox several times, struck a fire and watched the embattled straw mat blaze in voracious flames. Tears streamed down her wrinkled face and she sat petrified watching the black smoke curl in wisps into the cool afternoon sky. "I've come back to this. I've left the peace of my sons' homes to come to slaps, punches and insults," she cried as she huddled over her knees, hugging them. "I should've remained in America with my children but I felt I was a burden. At least they never beat me!"

Her wails turned to whimpers as scenes of her difficult life flashed before her mind. When she was a girl, her father died and her mother later remarried. Rana was sent to live with her grandfather and his wife. Her first lessons in physical abuse were learned at the hands of her step-grandmother. After she grew up, she married her cousin and thought her tribulations had ended and she would live happily ever after. But her marriage brought a barrage of hard work. Since Musa was a butcher and raised his own beef, the responsibility of feeding the livestock fell on her already overworked shoulders. Also, whenever Rana and her husband had a milk cow, the chore of milking became hers along with churning butter and feeding a family of 12. In spite of the days and nights of exhausting work and little sleep, any time Rana misperformed a task, she was corrected with a hit or kick. She joined the league of battered wives.

At last, physically unable to continue running back and forth caring for her husband's constant whims, she collapsed one day and refused to get up. When her husband approached her with demands of ironed clothes and cooked meals, Rana protested, "I can't keep up any longer."

You've sold the cows, but the kids have grown and left and I can't do the work alone. Go get married and leave me be. Get yourself another wife and give me a break!"

Rana was warned by her relatives not to be so foolish. "You'll be getting yourself in a mess. Your house won't be yours anymore. The second wife will make claims and you will be at her mercy!"

Rana didn't listen. She didn't have the strength to. So she insisted her husband marry. After a spectacular wedding things settled down and for a while, wife number two was amiable at first and made few demands, but when the bride started having babies, Rana became the babysitter. She fumed to herself, "Not enough bringing my own ten children into the world, I've got to raise all the babies Musa's dearest has. This could go on forever!"

In his infatuation for his second wife, Musa forgot his age, his former children, the hard work of his first wife and promised wife number two. "I'll write all my land in your name and in your children's names."

When she overheard these promises, Rana raged and fretted, regretting the day she insisted Musa marry. The land her children had worked and struggled over to weed, plow, plant and water would now belong not to them, but to their half-brothers. Rana herself became like an old dog waiting for a piece of meat and a pat on the head. The meat was slow in coming if ever, the pats never came, but the feud between Musa and Rana were re-enacted several times while wife number two was getting bolder and bolder.

When Rana returned from America, she had a few dollars rolled up in her pocket and had decided that in all the world there was no place better than her bare room where she lived alone. Her solitude was all that was left to her of a legacy of backbreaking work. During her absence, Musa and his new wife had honed in on the few meager possessions Rana had left in her living quarters which lacked running water and all basic essentials for comfort. In the meantime, Musa had built a new apartment with all the latest fixtures for himself and wife number two. The second wife would be warm in winter, cool in summer, have an automatic washing machine and dishwasher while Rana would have a battered face and no modern conveniences.

As the fire burned, Rana collected her shattered thoughts. Her dreams destroyed, she put out the rest of the fire, went to her room, wore her scarf and tattered robe and headed for her uncle's house with her eyes bulging, her face red from crying and her heart broken. She was an older woman, Musa was older too, but they both had forgotten that the most important aspect of any successful marriage is compromise and respect for the feelings of the other partner. Nevertheless, Musa's treatment of his first wife could never be judged fair. In Rana's eyes and possibly in Musa's, the fight over the straw mat became the straw that broke the camel's back. Divorce is one of the ugliest words in any language, especially to an older woman like Rana, for now she feels her dignity can never remain intact after such unfair action. A good marriage is not a business deal between two partners but a sacred institution. In Islam, the prerequisite of polygamy is the enforcement by the husband of equality between his wives in treatment, provisions and kindness. If he is unable to deal justly with more than one wife, then he should not have more than one wife, for he will be judged by God for his failure to treat his wives with equality.

How to toast bread in 39 easy steps

By Beth Harris

The Associated Press
WEST LAFAYETTE, Indiana — The assignment was simple — toast bread. But complex was better than simple and the winner went through 39 steps involving marbles, a toy train, a robot arm and a mousetrap, to move the bread.

Teams from Purdue University, the University of Arkansas, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Oakland University in Michigan competed in the 9th annual National Rube Goldberg Machine Contest before more than 500 spectators.

The contest honours the spirit of the late cartoonist who specialised in drawing whimsically complicated machines to perform the simplest of tasks. In this year's competition, contestants had to use at least 20 steps and toast the bread within five minutes.

The "toast masters," Purdue's entry by the Society of

Manufacturing Engineers, successfully defended the school's championship.

Among other things in the machine's sequence of events, a mousetrap was triggered, knocking over a smokestack, which triggered the train to chug along its track carrying bread.

Overhead, yellow and black race cars crisscrossed on strings and crashed into an oak bucket, which released an arm and in turn released a pink bunny wearing dark sunglasses that traveled along a rail and tripped a trap.

Also moving around in the complex process were marbles, a fountain, a barrel and the robot arm, which grabbed the toast when it popped out of the toaster.

"I'm really pleased with how it worked," said Steve Weinrich, a senior studying computer-integrated manufacturing technology. "The only damper we had was the mousetrap. It's never failed until today. It was misaligned,

and didn't hit the target right."

The rules allow teams a second attempt if their machine has a glitch on the first run.

Arkansas' Entry, by the Tau Hogs, featured a figure of Saddam Hussein, a balloon, a blow-dryer and a mousetrap.

But the \$10 contraption didn't quite survive the trip from Fayetteville.

Said team member David Gross: "We had a lot of delicate parts that got damaged."

Gross and teammate Craig Deaton admired Purdue's neatly painted machine, but preferred their amateur-looking effort.

"We think it's true rube spirit to find things in the yard instead of buying them from vendors," Gross said. Wisconsin-Milwaukee's entry finished second with the contest's smallest machine, which performed to the Beatles' song A Day In The Life.

A plastic male figure rambled through his morning routine while a comb dragged across his head and cereal poured into a bowl before his car tumbled out of a garage, eventually triggering the toaster into action.

Oakland University was third using a ski ramp built of popsicle sticks, a miniature figure of cartoon character Bart Simpson and a champagne bottle that poured its contents into three glasses revolving on a record turntable.

The bread emerged from the toaster browned on one side and with the insignia of Theta Tau Fraternity burned into the other side.

A maximum of 100 points were awarded for successful completion of the task, creativity, complexity, the use of related themes and keeping in the spirit of the contest. Points were deducted for inedible toast or human intervention once the machine started.

Cameras, flashes and photographs

By Maha Addasi

NO matter how good you are about avoiding having your picture taken, there comes a time when you just cannot avoid it for one reason or another. Take the picture for your I.D. for one or the one for the passport. The problem is that whether you are photogenic or not, you never look like yourself in pictures meant for official documents, and like it or not you find yourself at the photographer's studio taking "orders."

He tells you to turn your neck this way and hold your chin up that way, when you cringe the camera snaps. He holds his hand half a mile from the lens and demands that you look in that direction, then the camera snaps. When he tells you to say "cheese," you grind your teeth and the camera snaps. When finally the photo session is over and you can see red and blue stars all around, you hope that the pictures would turn out fine.

The question is how do you expect the pictures to turn out well when the problem is not in the technique or in the quality of the photography but in the person being photographed in relation to the photographer. As one psychologist put it: "You grow up being told not to speak to strangers, to avoid them then suddenly not only is it alright to talk to them but you can also smile to them."

He added that this strain of smiling to a stranger comes out in the facial expression.

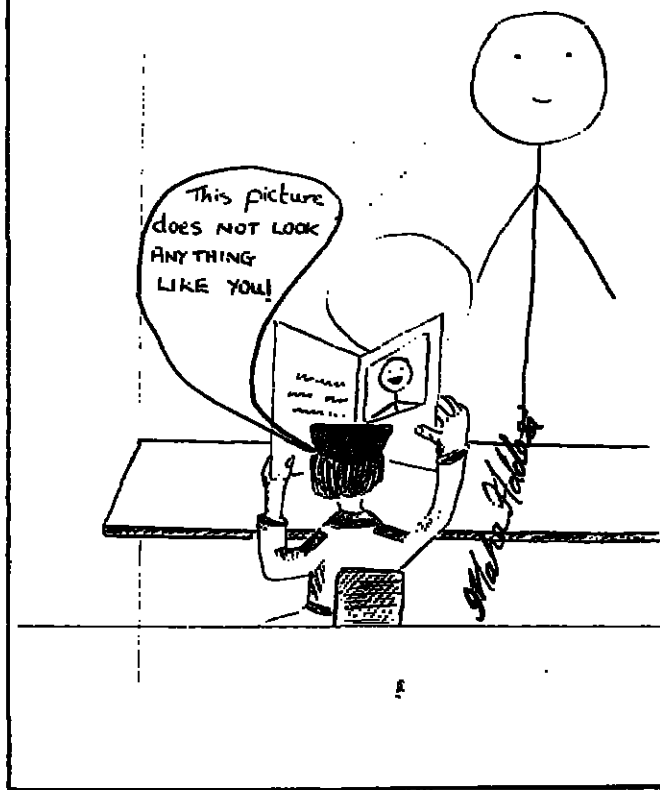
Which in turn means that your are not just being your own worst critic when you view your I.D. pictures, because the pictures "are" actually bad, and they should be good look upright.

That uptight expression does not "appear" in group pictures and family portraits because there are many centres of attention and the spotlight is not on you alone.

Now you know that the lopsided smile that you never thought you were capable of having does not mean you are not photogenic. Even though the picture will haunt you while it is on your driver's licence for ten years, all the expression means is that you were listening to your parents' advice in relation to strangers and that subconsciously you are just feeling guilty because you just broke the rules they drilled into you while you were growing up.

To have your picture retaken in the hopes of improving the pose is futile. A friend of mine tried that. According to her, her university I.D. just had to be changed. "I know because every time anyone saw the picture on my I.D. they would pick up their food trays and walk to a different table," she said. "Someone could have taken the I.D. and used it for extortion, and I would have paid to get it back," she added.

ARRIVALS



"So I resorted to the oldest trick in the book and 'lost' my I.D."

"When I saw the new picture I was about to cry. It was worse than the first one, if that was ever possible. I couldn't use my old I.D. because it was cancelled and I was stuck with the traumatic 'update'."

"If a picture is worth a thousand words," she said, "I don't want to know what my picture is worth."

We all know that there is no avoiding passport pictures, and they are awful but they can be a weapon you can use to your best advantage.... sometimes. Like if you want to get rid of a particular admirer you can send him or her a passport picture and you can guarantee never seeing them again. So next time you are at a photographer's studio don't feel pressured in attempting to improve on the previous batch of passport pictures. First because you cannot and second because passport photos are not all that bad. So just say "cheese."

JTV CHANNEL 2 WEEKLY PREVIEW

Thursday, March 28

8:30 Day By Day

Birth Wait

Kate and Brian decided to educate the children on how babies come into life. Soon they discover how hard this task is.

9:10 Black Forest Clinic

The Stunt

At the Black Forest Clinic the stuntman falls in love with a nurse and the nurse takes him seriously.

10:00 News in English

10:20 Feature Film

Blood Relatives

A young girl is killed and suspicion hovers around her cousin and her boss.... But the witty detective's investigation proves otherwise...

Friday, March 29

8:30 A Different World

Gelissa's ex-husband shows up and her new man gets jealous. But when Gelissa discovers that he hasn't changed a bit, she keeps the new lover.

9:10 Shakespeare

10:00 News in English

10:20 Bergerac

The Deadly Virus

When Kevin, Kim's lover, tries to free a laboratory test animals he contracts a lethal disease. Bergerac sets out to kill the epidemic before it spreads out on the island.

Saturday, March 30

8:30 No Job For A Lady

9:00 Encounter

10:00 News in English

10:20 Feature Film

The Colour Purple

Starring: Danny Glover

This is a classic movie that reveals the misery of the black people in America at the turn of this century.

Sunday, March 31

8:30 Mother And Son

Poor Arthur fails to convince his old lady to live on her own so that he gets to know some girls and may be even get married.

9:10 All Our Children

Age Of Discovery

Children between the ages of two and six make great strides and become tireless explorers, but still that caring hand must always be near.

10:00 News in English

10:20 Paradise

The Traveller

Miss Lawson comes across a stranger who has just lost his memory in an accident and in his memory lies a big surprise for Ethan.

Monday, April 1

8:30 Golden Girls

Trudy and Dorothy are remembering how they used to play tricks on each other, and all of a sudden they decide to resurrect this nasty habit.

9:10 The Keepers

The Country Mouse

Natalie's presence and Ricks' ambitious job plan, put a strain on his relationship with Marian.

10:00 News in English

10:20 Derrick

A peddler goes to a night club and picks up Rose-Mary who later is found dead in front of the peddler's house.

Tuesday, April 2

8:30 Charles In Charge

Charles and Budy lock themselves in a cage in solidarity with laboratory animals, and things get really complicated.

plicated.

9:10 Costean

Sea of Cortez-Legacy of Cortez

10:00 News in English

10:20 Columbo

Suitable For Framing

A murderer kills his rich uncle in the hope of getting rich quickly. He plans well and executes well but Columbo's wit is hard to beat.

Wednesday, April 3

8:30 After Henry

The Cold

When Sara catches cold everyone in the family follows suit and that spoils Sara's plans of resting for a week.

9:10 Our House

Small Steps

Grandfather Guss learns a good lesson that kids are easily affected by adults because they try to copy them.

10:00 News in English

10:20 Love And Hate

Joanne gets married in an attempt to amend her life, but loses her youngest son to her former husband who hires a professional killer to murder her.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

Thursday, March 28

1896 — First German naval bill, introduced by Alfred von Tirpitz, begins Germany's naval expansion.

1938 — Japan installs puppet government of Chinese republic in Nanjing.

1939 — Madrid's surrender to General Francisco Franco ends Spanish Civil War.

1945 — Germany's V-rocket attacks on Britain end during World War II; United States invades Cebu in heart of Philippines.

1957 — Britain releases Archbishop Makarios who is free to travel except to Cyprus.

1962 — Syrian army revolt fails; European secret army organisation in Algeria proclaims all-out guerrilla warfare against French forces.

1967 — U.N. Secretary-General U Thant proposes general truce in Vietnam, followed by peace talks, and the United States says it will go along.

1970 — Amars sect supporters of Imam El Mahdi rebel in Sudan.

1974 — Mounting civil unrest virtually paralyses founding government of Ethiopia's Emperor Haile Selassie.

1986 — Nicaragua sends truckloads of troops to area of heavy fighting near border with Honduras.

1989 — Syrian gunners and Christian army units duel with artillery and rockets in and around Beirut, Lebanon.

1990 — Three arrested in London in plot to smuggle U.S.-made nuclear triggering devices to Iraq.

Friday, March 29

1830 — Spain's King Ferdinand VII passes law allowing females to be heirs to throne.

1849 — Britain annexes Punjab in India by treaty with Maharajah of Lahore.

1864 — Ionian Islands are ceded by Britain to Greece.

1946 — New constitution in Gold Coast, which becomes first British African colony with majority of Africans in legislature.

1947 — National revolt against France in Madagascar begins.

1951 — Chinese government rejects U.S. offer for truce discussions in Korea.

1967 — France launches its first nuclear submarine.

1972 — Government of Bolivia orders 119 members of Soviet embassy staff to leave country — accusing embassy of financing leftist rebel movements.

1973 — Last American troops leave South Vietnam, ending direct military role of United States in Vietnam War.

1977 — U.S. and Soviet negotiators, meeting in Moscow, agree to set up committees to seek solutions to several arms control and diplomatic problems.

1988 — Bomb planted in jeep kills at least four Soviets in Kabul, Afghanistan.

1989 — Two Czechoslovak teenagers hijack Hungarian airliner from Prague to Frankfurt in attempt to reach United States.

1990 — Prime Minister Bob Hawke claims victory in Australian election, becoming first Labour winner of four consecutive terms.

Saturday, March 30

1863 — Denmark incorporates Schleswig; Poland is divided into provinces by Russia.

1885 — Russian occupation of Penjdeh, Afghanistan, provokes crisis in Anglo-Russian relations.

1905 — Greeks in Crete revolt against Turkish rule.

1912 — Sultan of Morocco signs treaty making Morocco

a French protectorate.

1933 — James B.M. Hertzog forms national coalition in South Africa and is joined by Jan. C. Smuts.

1940 — Japan establishes puppet government in occupied China.

1967 — North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) formally closes its military headquarters in France.

1974 — Chinese jetliner arrives in New York in what is described as first civilian flight from Chinese mainland to United States.

1983 — Sikh militants kill 15 people on overnight attacks in northern Indian state of Punjab.

1989 — Rebel inmates agree to end five-day mutiny in Guatemala's largest prison.

1990 — Estonia's parliament declares Soviet Union an occupying power and pledges to seek full independence.

Sunday, March 31

1683 — Poland forms alliance with Holy Roman Empire against Turks.

1854 — U.S. Commodore Perry makes first treaty with Japan, opening two Japanese ports to trade with outside world.

1877 — Bartle Frere is named British high commissioner of South Africa with instructions to work toward federation.

1889 — Eiffel Tower is opened in Paris.

1905 — German Kaiser William II's visit to Tangier sets off first Moroccan crisis.

1913 — Turkey accepts recommendations of great powers for peace with Bulgaria.

1936 — Britain and France pledge to support Poland if it is invaded.

1941 — Germans launch counter-offensive in North Africa in World War II.

1942 — Japan's successes in Burma and Anaman Islands threaten India's west coast during World War II.

1948 — U.S. Congress passes Marshall Aid Pact for European recovery.

1955 — Chinese Communist Party begins purge.

1966 — Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd's Nationalist Party wins greatest election victory in South Africa's history.

1987 — About 800 leftist guerrillas kill 43 soldiers and U.S. military adviser in attack on major army base in El Salvador.

1989 — Turkey's Premier Turgut Ozal overhauls his cabinet, dismissing his brother and cousin and 10 other ministers.

1990 — Thousands riot against new "poll tax" in central London, leaving 75 civilians and 58 police injured and 341 demonstrators are arrested.

Monday, April 1

1918 — Britain's Royal Air Force is founded.

1937 — Indian constitution goes into effect but All-India Party abstains from forming government, demanding complete independence.

1945 — U.S. launches invasion of Okinawa in World War II.

1948 — Soviet Union begins to interfere with traffic between Berlin and West Germany.

1960 — South African government bans African National Congress and Pan-African Congress.

1962 — Swiss referendum rejects manufacture or importation of atomic weapons.

1990 — Lithuanian President Landsbergis says "Gorbachev demanding impossible things" in asking annulment of independence declaration.

By The Associated Press

Weekend Crossword

WHERE'S TOM?

By Raymond Hanel

ACROSS	DOWN
1 Gambling game	1 King
2 Gossip in game	2 Partner
3 1482 D.C.	3 1482 D.C.
4 1482 D.C.	4 1482 D.C.
5 1482 D.C.	5 1482 D.C.
6 1482 D.C.	6 1482 D.C.
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15 1482 D.C.	15 1482 D.C.
16 1482 D.C.	16 1482 D.C.
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30 1482 D.C.	30 1482 D.C.
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Kylie Minogue grows up

By Robert Woodward
Reuters

SYDNEY — Australian pop star Kylie Minogue has decided it's time to tarnish the squeaky-clean image the critics have long mocked.

In the four years since she left school to star in the hugely successful soap opera *Neighbours*, Minogue has earned millions by trading on her youth and sweet smile.

The fame of the Melbourne teenager grew worldwide when her version of Little Eva's 1960 hit *Locomotion* — the biggest selling record in Australia in the 1980s — and the follow-up *I Should Be So Lucky* sold millions.

Now Minogue says her image is changing. The girl next door has been evicted by her elder sister — the one who wears leather, drinks cocktails in nightclubs and dates a long-haired rock singer.

Pictures of the diminutive Minogue appear in society pages as she steps out with Michael Hutchence, lead vocalist of the Australian rock group *Inxs*.

She has modelled clothes for upmarket magazines including *Vogue* and scored maximum "street cred"

points by appearing on the cover of February's Australian *Rolling Stone* magazine.

Her world tour, launched in Australia in February, is designed to show that the young woman once dubbed the singing badgie can now strut on stage as well as any Janet Jackson.

But first signs show it will be some time before soft pop turns to hard rock.

"Her energetic and really very cheerful 1.5 hour concert was a good-natured exercise in gratitude for her fans as well as a total contradiction of any image change," the Melbourne Age newspaper said. "The publicity has got it all wrong: Kylie is as sweet and sassy as she's ever been."

The problem is while Minogue wants to be taken seriously, she is sensible enough to scorn the young fans whose pocket money helped her make an estimated 50 million Australian dollars (\$38 million) last year.

Critics say her latest single *Step Back In Time* is much like earlier hits, a catchy dance tune designed to be played so loud no one will try to catch the forgettable lyrics. Minogue's *Rhythm Of*

Love album does, however, contain four songs which she co-wrote, breaking the stranglehold British songwriters Stock, Aitken and Waterman had over her career. She also helped design her stage show on the current tour.

"It's a nice feeling to have some control," she told *Rolling Stone*. "That's an age (22) when you start taking stock of yourself and you get that inner confidence, which is what I feel I have now."

Minogue's image as a baby doll manipulated by others has dogged her from the days her Charlene character in *Neighbours* made her a household name in Australia and Britain.

Her romance with screen husband Jason Donovan continued after she left *Neighbours* to concentrate on her singing career. Her popularity, particularly in Britain, kept growing.

Madame Tussaud's wax museum made a Kylie waxwork and she was asked to switch on the Christmas lights in London's Regent Street. In 1989 Japan voted her best female vocalist and France its number one radio artist. She dabbled in films, play-



Kylie Minogue

ing the lead in *The Delinquents*, a moderately successful Australian film.

"I have a lot more credibility than I used to. Michael's very credible," Minogue told journalists recently. "He encourages me to think for myself, he doesn't tell me what to think. He's just given me a lot of confidence."

British opera sings a sad song — about money to survive

By Kate Dourian
Reuters

LONDON — The lights dimmed, the orchestra was in the pit and the audience was awaiting the overture when a man emerged from the wings to strike a now depressingly familiar note in British opera.

English National Opera (ENO) director Peter Jonas wanted money.

"We just need money, and quickly — to live on," he pleaded, quoting a line from the opera *"Lady Macbeth Of Mtsensk"* by Soviet composer Dmitri Shostakovich.

Britain's entertainment industry has taken a battering from the economic recession and a tourism slump due to the Gulf war.

The ENO maintains a tradition of staging operas in English. Jonas says the company could soon be in trouble.

If it fails to raise more cash from its own resources over the next 12 months it will also lose part of a state subsidy which meets almost half its costs.

The subsidy rules of Britain's Arts Council now require a company to show it is cutting costs and making an effort to fund it self, in order to qualify for extra money

from the taxpayer.

Jonas's speech was a grim prologue to the opening of an acclaimed revival of the Richard Strauss opera *Salome*, which received rapturous applause from a full house last Thursday.

He introduced the ENO's latest scheme called "sponsor an opera" which is designed to raise private money and shrink a deficit approaching \$1 million (\$1.84 million).

Under the scheme, patrons can donate as little as £25 (\$45) in return for privileges like invitations to rehearsals at the ENO's Coliseum Theatre and a tax incentive.

Lady Macbeth, a 1936 work which took a harsh look at the Stalin era and was banned in the Soviet Union, was picked for the project. So far more than half the £50,000 (\$100,000) needed for the production has been raised.

ENO spokeswoman Jane Livingston said Macbeth was chosen for its prestige value — the company won two awards in 1987 for its production of the opera.

Heir to the throne Prince Charles takes a special interest in the arts and architecture but says he favours private sponsorship of the arts as practised in the

United States.

He wants new tax relief rules on donations to make this more attractive.

The ENO says Arts Council subsidy rules have already forced it to halve the number of new productions this season.

The Royal Opera House in nearby Covent Garden has not been spared the recession in the arts.

It has a deficit of £3.5 million (\$4.6 million) and is considering options that include staging operas in the rock concert venue of Wembley Arena to attract larger audiences and satisfy the Arts Council.

Covent Garden, which houses the opera and two ballet companies, gets only 38 per cent of its budget through state subsidy and argues this is less than half the state aid granted to the Vienna and Milan Opera houses.

Last year the Royal Ballet launched an appeal to raise cash to buy shoes for its dancers.

Another ballet company, the London Ballet, said this month it would have to close in June unless it received new funding.

A British artistic flagship, the Royal Shakespeare Com-

pany, was forced to abandon its London theatre for three months last year because of a cash shortage.

Covent Garden argues that it sells the cheapest seats in Europe at its 2,000 seat theatre — the top price for a performance is £112 (about \$200).

Although it has raised prices marginally in recent years, it is reluctant to raise them further and risk charges of elitism.

Cost-cutting has already led to the cancellation of two new productions this season.

"It has involved a certain number of redundancies mostly on the administrative side and that is tough because we run a tight ship anyway," a spokeswoman said.

The argument for extra state funding is likely to be strengthened by figures released last Friday showing that the arts contributed £6 billion (\$11 billion) to Britain's overseas earnings in 1989-90.

Exports of London stage hits like the musicals *Phantom Of The Opera*, *Aspects Of Love* and *Starlight Express* were among the biggest earners, according to the report by the economists advisory group.

Chinese film audiences see red

PEKING (R) — Chinese cinema-goers are back on a diet of Maoist virtue as local film-makers, stung by Communist criticism, turn away from the progressive and innovative films of the 1980s.

Although film studios have not yet been forced to abandon dramas and adventure movies completely, they are coming under renewed pressure to promote the traditional doctrines of the ruling Communist Party.

A growing trend is to resuscitate films that glorify proletarian values and which were the mainstay of Chinese cinema for nearly 40 years.

Critics now expect fewer films like *Yellow Earth*, a mid-1980s production that took a gritty realistic look at the life of poor peasants. The film is considered a classic by Western critics.

A year ago a national film conference attacked "bourgeois liberalism" — the catchphrase for Western influences — and demanded

drastic changes in film content.

Several studios responded with a flurry of heroic epics to coincide with the Chinese Communist Party's 70th anniversary in July this year.

The new direction was welcomed by the official China Film Weekly, which urged film directors to "eulogise party cadres" and to exploit the propaganda potential of historical tales.

Singled out for ideological plaudits even while still in production has been Mao Tse-tung And His Son, the story of Mao's eldest son, Mao Anying, who died in the 1950-53 Korean war.

That film and the upcoming 100-million yuan (\$19.2 million) trilogy *Great Decisive Battles* are intended to rehabilitate the orthodox Marxism lauded by Chairman Mao, who died in 1976 and whose prestige reached a low ebb in the 1980s.

Minister of Film, Radio and Television Ai Zhisheng,

quoted in the latest issue of China Film Weekly, emphasised the need for films that depict ideology as paramount.

He called for a harvest of films that serve the people and Socialism.

Communist elders want movies to give a good example to dissatisfied youth, who they believe need positive role models.

Film Bureau Deputy Chief Bao Tongzhi urged studios to offer contemporary heroes to audiences, citing the film *Hello Pacific* as an example.

Ageing leader Deng Xiaoping, architect of China's economic reforms, is favourably portrayed in the film. It has documentary footage of his efforts to promote special economic zones in southern Guangdong Province.

Television viewers have also been treated to patriotic blasts from the past in recent months with a showing of the 1960s classic *The Red Star*

Calls Me To Arms and a television drama about the selfless Communist paragon Lei Feng.

Although the authorities say such so-called "red earth" films have been revived by popular demand, the average Chinese has shown little enthusiasm for a return to art for propaganda's sake.

It may be a case of déjà vu for jaded film audiences.

"These old men grab at the past because they have nothing to say about the present," one disgruntled cinema-goer said, referring to efforts by China's leadership to restore orthodox Communist dogma.

Many Chinese units force their workers to buy tickets for patriotic productions.

"They can make me buy the ticket, they can even compel me to sit in the cinema but they can't force me to watch the screen," one state employee said.

Exiled Angolan musician says peace moves give him hope

By William MacLean
Reuters

A UNITA BASE, Angola — After years of campaigning through his music for political change, exiled Angolan singer Bonga says his country appears on the brink of a new era of peace and free expression.

Bonga, a prominent opponent of the leftist Angolan government, said the authorities last week started lifting long-standing bans on his records, a sign that political attitudes are easing after 16 years of civil war.

At 49, Bonga is Angola's

most successful popular musician overseas. He has won gold and platinum discs for his records sales and has fans in Europe, Latin America and Africa.

"We are all fed up with war," he said in an interview at a base of the rebel UNITA movement in southern Angola. UNITA and the government are currently thrashing out a peace deal.

"When the people finally gain democracy and free expression, we will discover the reason for this stupid war, this war that has claimed victims in all families," Bonga said.

"The very day (UNITA leader Jonas) Savimbi and (President Eduardo) Dos Santos shake hands, all the soldiers will be delighted to see that the war is finished at last."

An athletic bearded figure in jeans and cowboy boots, Bonga sings in Portuguese and Kimbundu, a language of northern Angola.

Some of his songs have political themes critical of the government and others are based on Angolan folklore. He left Angola in 1966 and lives in Portugal and France, but he wants to settle back in

his homeland once peace returns.

"My music is the popular music sung by everyone. But I also made music an arm of political engagement for the Angolan people ... so I am disgraced in Luanda. The government calls me all kinds of names."

He denies he is a member of UNITA (National Movement for the Total Independence of Angola). But he says his sympathy for the guerrilla movement until recently cost him access to the audience he cares for most — the Angolan people.

'Camping' with Julian Clary

By Matt Wolf

The Associated Press

LONDON — Fancy being publicly mocked by a man in mascara, satin and vinyl who raises the double entendre to mathematically impossible heights?

Apparently much of London is enjoying such mockery as Julian Clary: *Camping At The Aldwych* has become the unexpected hit of this gloomy West End year.

Dressed in a cowboy suit which he later discards in favour of black cycle shorts, the tall, slender Clary wheels on stage on a rolling horse named Dobbin.

He cracks sexual jokes unprintable here-vocalises a little with two backup singers — in a sotto voce "I thank you" precedes each number and involves the audience in a live version of *Sticky Moments*, the TV game show which made his name.

When Clary is not being utterly lewd, his game is saying something innocuous with a pout or a leer that invites the audience to create its own dirty punch line.

Acknowledging applause at the start of the show, Clary avers, "there's nothing I like more than a warm hand upon my entrance."

He appears with his televi-

sion sidekick, Hugh Jelly, and pianist Russell Churney — "the only heterosexual in show business," Clary claims.

This is the Aldwych theatre, former home of the Royal Shakespeare Company.

But dressing up is a British tradition, now carried on by local icons such as drag artists Danny La Rue and Barry Humphries' creation, Dame Edna Everage.

Those predicting doom for Clary underestimated the breadth — or depth — of British taste. Like him or not, London's most celebrated androgynous is a phenomenon. And his next stop is New York, opening April 21 at the Ballroom.

Reflecting recently on his success, the 31-year-old performer said: "I'm very bemused by it. I'm very bemused by lots of things."

Clary was the youngest of three children in a "typical middle-class" family in Swindon, west of London. His father, a former police officer, is now a building caretaker. His mother is a probation officer.

Clary wanted to be an actor, but roles in such plays as *I Was A Teenage Sausage Dog* and *Chase Me Up The Garden, S'il Vous Plait* led

him to conclude that "it didn't really work."

He began to click as a comedy act called The Joan Collins Fan Club, appearing with Fanny The Wonder Dog, a mutt who wore a paper hat and just sat on a stool throughout the performance. He dropped the title when the movie actress objected now Clary occupies the dressing room Collins used during her recent run in *Private Lives*.

In person, Clary is much quieter than his outrageous stage persona would suggest. Without mascara and fishnet stockings, he almost looks like someone you could bring home to mother. Perhaps it's no surprise that matrons — not to mention respectable suburbanites — form a large part of his audience.

"I'd have thought a few years ago I'd be a sort of fringe-y performer here," Clary said in an interview. "TV changed that."

And *Sticky Moments* changed TV. Launched on Independent Television in October 1989, it was soon drawing 3 million viewers a week.

Scoring is arbitrary, and prizes always include a statuette of Fanny The Wonder Dog. Imagine a determined-

ly smutty "gong show," and you start to get the idea.

On one show, Clary announced that he had been deeply wounded by a tabloid newspaper which called him "a prancing pooker." He lashed back with a song — *I'm A Mincing* — delivered in his on-so-desperately-bored manner.

Sticky Moments has everything to do with performing. Like Groucho Marx's *You Bet Your Life*, it lives or dies on the wits of the host.

"I never had any interest in doing a game show," said Clary. "It's more that the bits of my cabaret act that were the best came from working with the audience. I wanted a way to make that into a television form, I suppose."

The critics were divided. The Guardian's Nancy Banks-Smith found the show "so dreadful, it was actually painful like mumps." But the Evening Standard's Jaci Stephen called Clary "an actor, a comic, and a real artiste (who) makes an awful lot of television suddenly look very bland."

Marxism Today, a ponderous political journal, praised Clary as "the first new age game show host, breathing life into a failing form."

By Nicholas Kotch
Reuters

OUAGADOUGOU — Africa's in-crowd know exactly where they have to be in February 1993.

The far-sighted are already trying to reserve rooms at the Hotel Indépendance, a modest establishment which is transformed for one week every other year into the over-booked centre of African chic.

For the film directors, writers, actors and budding movie moguls who descended on Ouagadougou for the Pan-Africa Film Festival (Fespaco), which held its 12th meeting here this month, the 135-room hotel is the only place to stay.

Visiting ministers and official dignitaries are lodged in the posher, French-managed hotel across town but for the actors, directors, writers and budding moguls the Indépendance has a magnetic pull.

From early morning its lobby is milling with star-gazers, many of whom stayed up half the night talking movies, perhaps after dinner at l'Eau Vive, another Fespaco haunt.

The open-air restaurant is run by nuns, mostly redeemed prostitutes, who sign Ave Maria between courses of excellent French and African cuisine.

Back at the Indépendance, the first groups form: Some exchange notes on the films they saw yesterday, while others check the fine print on a distribution deal.

Starlets pose for photographers beside plum-trees in

Film festival is a must for African chic

the gardens and French radio reporters hurry through the building, microphone in hand, circling their next prey.

"I must have given 25 interviews today. This is really exhausting," said Bamba Bakary, star of a 1982 light comedy about polygamy called *Bal Poussiere*, which was a big hit in Europe as well as Africa.

The film's director, Henri Duparc of the Ivory Coast, is not particularly rated in high-brow African film circles although his earnings mean he can laugh all the way from the box-office.

He did not bother submitting his latest frothy and mildly erotic offering, *Le Sixième Doigt* (the sixth finger), for this year's competition.

Ever since a tiny group of friends launched Fespaco here in 1969, the festival's juries have favoured more earnest treatments of Africa's life and times.

The 1991 winner of the Yemenga Stallion, Fespaco's equivalent of an Oscar, proved the rule. It went to *Tilai* by 37-year-old Idressa Ouedraogo of Burkina Faso, confirming him as Africa's top young director.

The film is set in the vast expanses of the Sahel, like its successful predecessors

Yaaba and Yam Daabo, and tells the tragic story of a peasant who tries and fails to challenge traditional custom after his father takes his fiancée.

Fespaco regulars say such themes sell well in France, the source of government and private funds for many African movies. But they see dependence on French financing as bringing risk of picking subjects that please Europeans and forgetting African audiences.

English-speaking countries were again thinly represented at this year's Fespaco with *Jit*, by Zimbabwe's Michael Raeburn, the strongest entry.

Nigeria, despite being Africa's most populous country and investing a fortune in film laboratories and equipment, has so far failed to make any impact.

The vast majority of hit films in Africa are still foreign, although not necessarily from Hollywood. African audiences prefer films from the round-the-clock studios of Bombay.

"People know exactly what to expect with an Indian movie. There will be fantasy, costumes, music and romance. The stories are simple so illiterates don't need to worry about the sub-titles," a

Senegalese film distributor explained.

As at film festivals the world over, the 1991 jury's choice was immediately challenged. Many argued that *Tilai*, having won the special prize at Cannes in 1990, should not have competed in a forum for promoting new African films.

Halfpoune, by Tunisian director Ferid Boughedir, itself the winner of at least a dozen international prizes, was generally rated superior.

Its failure to win a single award at Fespaco led to mutterings that black Africa's film industry was getting revenge after last year's Carthage Festival in Tunisia, which was dominated by Arab-language movies.

Ouedraogo was also accused at a news conference of presenting a mythical view of rural Africa, ignoring politically sensitive themes like corruption, dictatorship and urban misery.

"I can't carry the whole of African cinema on my shoulders," he shot back. "I make films I want to make."

The 1991 Fespaco vintage was generally considered below par, with the exception of *Ta Dona*, a remarkable first film by Malian director Adama Drabo.

Even so, the high standards show how far and fast the seventh art has progressed in Africa.

Patrick Ilboudo, author of the best guide to the continent's cinema, says the first film directed by a black African was Mouramani, a 22-minute short made by Guinean Mamadou Toure in 1953.

Do the eyes have it?

By Philippa Neave

NEW YORK — Imagine a map of the body capable of revealing illness long before a diagnosis of a person's health. A miraculous medical breakthrough? We carry this astounding piece of equipment right in our eyes, according to a small but growing group of practitioners in alternative medicine.

The eye, and more precisely the iris, or coloured part of the eye, they say, is a faithful and ever-changing mirror of the body's health which provides a clear picture of every part of the anatomy. Known as iridology, this method of diagnosis is still controversial but is fast capturing the attention of some members of the medical profession in Europe, Asia, Australia, South America and the United States.

Iridology has been practiced in various parts of the world for over 100 years, though some claim that the idea of looking at people's eyes to determine their state

of health is as old as time.

Modern iridology was established at the end of the 19th century by a Hungarian physician, Dr. Ignatz Von Peczely. As a young man, he rescued an owl in his garden, and accidentally broke its leg. He reported that he noticed a dark black mark appearing in the animal's clear eye. He nursed the bird's leg and as it healed, the mark faded into a visible white scare-like line. Intrigued, he began studying the eyes of his patients and over the years built what he saw as a correlation between markings in the eye and the patient's health.

Through years of carefully noting the nature and location of the markings and performing many autopsies, the physician developed one of the first charts showing the topography of the iris and indicating the regions that correspond to specific organs and parts of the body. In time the chart has been refined and developed by iridologists who now use sophisticated cameras and computers to photograph and analyse the

iris.

Iridology is based on the premise that, like fingerprints, no two eyes are alike. With magnifiers, iridologists scrutinise the complex web of fibres that make up the iris, believing that the weave is in itself an indication of the subject's constitution. Thousands of white fibres are organised into three layers of vascular arcs and are linked to the densest nerve system in the body. Breaks, holes and stains in the fabric of the iris are seen as indications of illness or lesions in the body.

Dr. Bernard Jensen, an American who is considered the father of modern iridology, explains: "From the markings in the eye, we can tell inherent weaknesses and hereditary problems. By looking at the eye of a child, we can tell its constitutional background." Jensen, 83, started his career as a chiropractor but has dedicated most of his life to the practice, teaching and study of iridology.

Jensen, who works in California, has been building up an "eye bank" of 18,000 iris photographs and is using computers to analyse and compare the markings and patients' state of health. A specific study is under way to compare eye markings and incidences of heart disease. "Iridology," says Jensen, who has received many international awards, "is still at the experimental stage. It has a lot of truth and good in it, but it still needs a lot of investigation. We have enough for it to be a good incentive to continue the work and see how right we are."

An organisation called "Iridologists International" claims a membership of several thousand doctors worldwide. Some 3,000 doctors are now practicing iridology in Germany, and, says Jensen, many others are in Malaysia, where he recently lectured as part of one of his many worldwide tours. He

also worked with doctors at a veterans' hospital in Taipei, Taiwan, who are also conducting research with the help of computers.

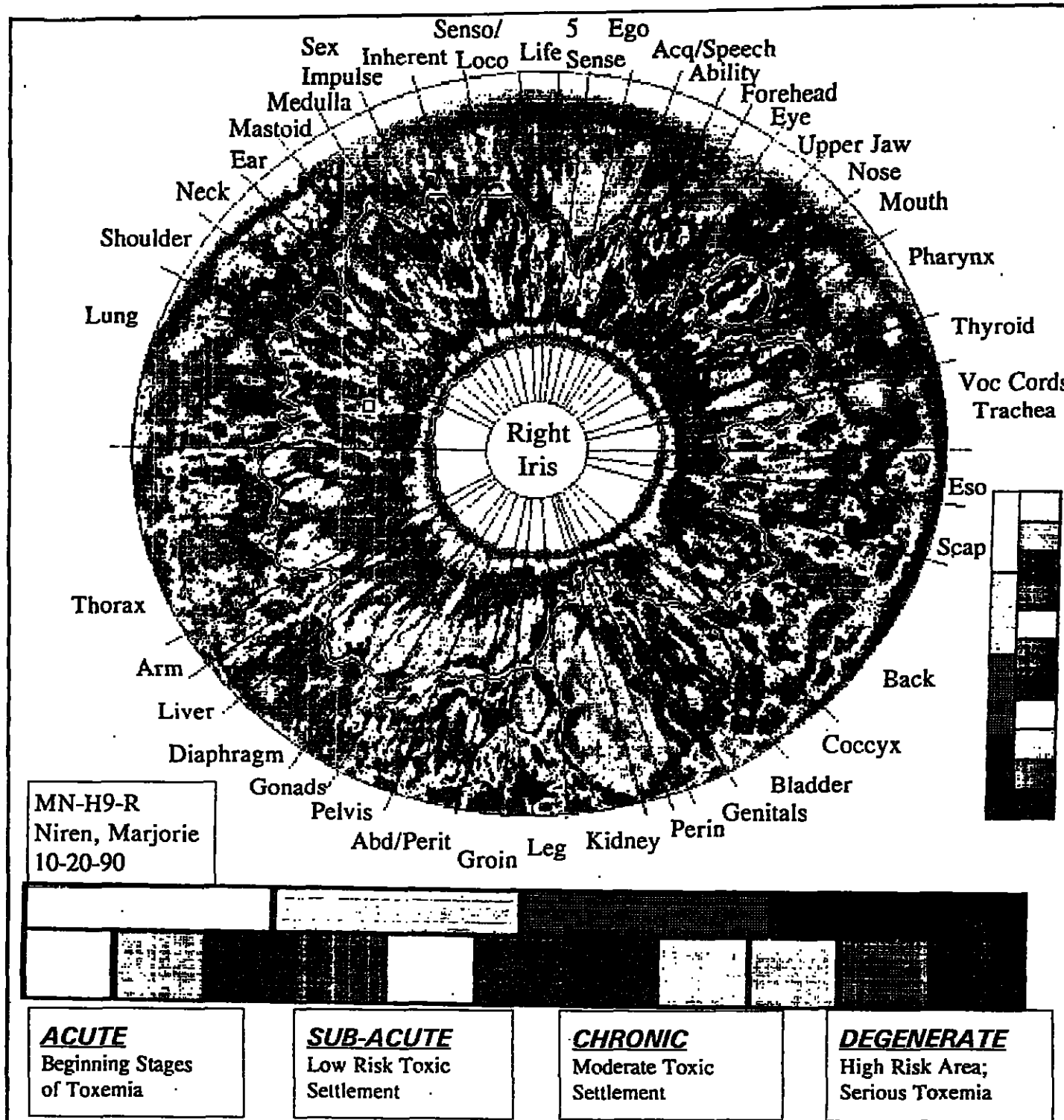
Iridologists say the left eye reflects the left side of the body and the right eye, the right side. The iris is read from top to bottom with the organs in the upper part of the body represented in the top part of the iris and the lower organs in the bottom part.

In a recent experiment, iridologist Eva Coleman, 52, who practices in New York and Philadelphia, was sent to consult several people, including 41-year-old Ruth Mayberry, who had never heard of iridology before. "I had been feeling rotten, with very low energy and nausea all the time," Mayberry said. "I knew it had something to do with my digestive system, and the iridologist saw it right away. She also saw that a few years ago I had broken my back."

"I have no problem believing in the principle of iridology. It makes sense to me that physical things should be recorded in the eye. To me, it works rather like a tree trunk, the marks show life's history," added Mayberry.

Despite some 30 books in circulation around the world and extensive studies conducted by iridologists, the mainstream medical establishment tends to dismiss this form of care as quackery. Said Professor Jeffrey Odel, a researcher at the ophthalmology clinic of New York's Presbyterian Medical Centre: "The iris can show some things about the body but there is no scientific basis to the zones mapped out by iridologists. I can't say there is any validity to it. If you ask me, it is a load of hogwash."

Iridologists argue that not so long ago, the medical world said the same about acupuncture and other forms of alternative medicine that have now gained scientific support. Although iridology remains a marginal science



Dr. Bernard Jensen, an expert in the field of iridology, believes that the iris can provide a picture of the overall health of the body even before symptoms appear.

practised mostly in the context of a holistic and natural approach to health care, increasing numbers of people are taking it seriously. Part of the reason is that most iridologists do not limit themselves to a simple diagnosis or send their patients away with their ailments. A majority of iridologists are also trained as herbalists and, when they counsel patients, lay heavy emphasis on nutrition as a key to good health.

Yet, while some medical

professionals acknowledge that iridology could be a very useful and potentially revolutionary tool for diagnosis, the profession is still uncontrolled. There are no official standards for qualification, which means the profession is open to abuse.

Says Lisa Cosman, a well-known nutritionist practicing in New York City: "Iridology is potentially a very valuable tool, but it is often misused. It is a very subtle and precise art, and its value depends

entirely on how well trained the iridologist is."

It reportedly takes at least eight years of training and experience to produce a reliable diagnosis. In addition, serious iridologists undergo substantial training in nutrition and herbal medicine. Two fields of expertise that are also fairly uncharted. Notes Cosman: "I have been a nutritionist for 30 years, and I can say that there are a lot of people out there who claim to be nutritionists and

may be well intentioned, but very few of them are trustworthy."

Although iridology can provide some very important clues to potential medical problems, deciphering the clues is so complex that few are able to do so for now, experts say. "People must have the diagnosis confirmed by a medical doctor. That is a matter of responsibility. Be cautious, go beyond it," warns Cosman — World News Link.

Fatal cancer in nuclear workers shown over long term

By Elliot Spagat
The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Fatal cancers can take up to a quarter-century to become evident among nuclear plant workers, a study suggests.

A separate study, however, found that people living near such plants had no greater risk of getting fatal cancers than other people.

In the first study, published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, epidemiologist Steve Wing of the University of North Carolina and fellow researchers studied all 1,524 deaths from 1943 to 1984 among the 8,318 white male workers at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

Women and non-whites were excluded because they had fewer deaths and lower radiation exposure, the researchers said.

The men had been hired at the Tennessee installation from 1943 to 1972. Twenty years after they began working at the plant, the workers' death rate from all causes increased 2.68 per cent per radiation dose over what would have been expected with no radiation exposure, the researchers reported.

The data shows the Oak Ridge workers were 21 per cent less likely to develop a fatal cancer than the general public. The authors explain that by saying the workers are generally in better health than most people.

"This, I think, is the

longest-term exposure ever studied," said William R. Hendee, AMA vice president of science and technology.

The second study, financed by the National Cancer Institute, examined all cancer deaths in 107 counties near U.S. nuclear plants and compared them to cancer deaths in 292 counties far from nuclear installations.

The authors showed that from 1950 to 1984 people living near the 62 nuclear plants surveyed were not any more likely to develop a fatal cancer.

"We're saying that if radiation cause cancer, it's too small to be found," said Seymour Jablon, a National Cancer Institute researcher and a report author. "I would personally say that people who live in counties where there are nuclear facilities shouldn't worry."

But H. Jack Geiger of the anti-nuclear group Physicians For Social Responsibility questioned the conclusion because researchers failed to measure radiation levels in the people studied.

"You don't know who, if any, were exposed," Geiger said. "Not everyone who crosses the street gets hit by a car."

In the Oak Ridge study, most of the increase death rate came from cancer deaths, which were 4.94 per cent higher than they would have been without radiation exposure.

LONDON (AP) — Pregnant women should be told an estimated time of arrival rather than an exact due date, says an obstetrician writing in the *British Medical Journal*, *Lancet*.

Dr. Nigel Saunders, an obstetrician at St. Mary's Hospital in London, said women get too anxious when they don't deliver on the date. Then they may opt for an induced delivery when it isn't really necessary, he said.

Doctors should tell women the expected due date is any time between 38 and 42 weeks after the last menstrual cycle, Saunders said in a telephone interview.

In general, less than 5 per cent of all women deliver on their due date, said Saunders. "I think we need to get the message across that this isn't an accurate prediction," he said.

But Dr. Stuart Campbell, an obstetrician at London's King's College School of Medicine and Dentistry, said it's unrealistic to not estimate the delivery date.

"Women like to focus on a

particular date," he said in a telephone interview. "Most women realise they're not going to deliver on that exact date."

Campbell recommended dating by ultrasound rather than by the last menstrual cycle. Doctors can determine fairly accurately an estimated delivery date according to an ultrasound, he said.

"The beauty of 40 weeks is that once we know the patient is approaching 40

weeks, we can do a test to establish she is normal," said Dr. Campbell.

With ultrasound, doctors can monitor the amount of amniotic fluid remaining. If there's not enough fluid, delivery can be induced, he said.

Estimates are often made by a formula popularised by a 19th century physician, Franz Carl Naegele. According to Naegele's rule, the delivery date is determined by adding

nine months and seven days to the date of the last menstrual cycle.

It's normal, though, for women to give birth anywhere from 38 to 42 weeks after conception, said Saunders.

As an example of how many variables can affect Naegele's rule, Saunders said that his review of 23,000 births showed that tall women tended to give birth

later. About 65 per cent of 1.7-metre women gave birth after the due date compared with less than 45 per cent of women shorter than 1.52 metres.

Saunders can't explain why this should be so.

"I'm not making a big thing about height," said Saunders. "I was trying to give an example of how one thing can influence this calculation. Maybe smoking habits, or race, would affect the formula, too."

"It was just a little light-hearted plea to show people not to get too uptight about this rule," he said.

'Don't give women exact due date'

New genetic engineering process may halt AIDS virus

SYDNEY (R) — A new genetic engineering technique discovered by Australian scientists is being used successfully in the laboratory to halt AIDS-like viruses, and early results suggest it could halt progression of AIDS virus.

The technique allows researchers to design a specific molecule to destroy vital parts of virtually any virus, its inventors at the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) in Canberra said.

"It should work (against AIDS)," geneticist Dr. Geoff Symonds of the Children's Medical Research Foundation in Sydney said by telephone recently.

He and fellow researchers have been learning to use the technique, dubbed "gene shears" by its inventors, against the killer virus.

"We are attempting to inactivate the AIDS virus, and have had success with a mouse leukaemia retrovirus whose replication is very

similar to AIDS. We're fairly confident gene shears will work."

Australia's Department of Industry, Science and Technology said the technique's applications are wide ranging and could correct genetic disorders in humans, make crops resistant to disease and save cattle from foot and mouth disease.

The gene shears technique will be developed by U.S. pharmaceutical company Johnson And Johnson and French agricultural company Groupe Limagrain.

Johnson And Johnson wave signed a four-year agreement with Gene Shears Pty Ltd, a company set up by the CSIRO researchers who discovered the process in 1988. Johnson And Johnson plan to set up laboratories in Australia to develop the gene shears technology.

"It does offer a lot of potential, and could in theory be applied to AIDS," Johnson and Johnson Australian Research Chief Dennis Wade said by telephone.

Jim Haseloff and Wayne Gerlach of the CSIRO's division of plant industry stumbled across the gene shears process while studying a parasite that preys on plant viruses.

Called a "satellite RNA" (ribonucleic acid), the parasite is a ribozyme molecule with a simple series of genetic instructions that straps onto a virus and hijacks its replication system, stopping the virus from multiplying.

The researchers found a way of copying the chemical sequence, taking over control of the process to build specific ribozymes, or gene shears, to strike at designated targets.

Wade said the process was promising for AIDS research. "You could design a gene shear that would chew up messenger RNA of the (AIDS) virus itself and stop it replicating."

CSIRO's Gerlach said the successes of gene shears have so far only occurred in the laboratory under controlled

conditions.

"You have to know what you're targeting," said Gerlach. "You have to have the exact chemical sequence of the target so that you are able to design a molecule that will hit that sequence."

To work within a living organism such as a human, a molecule has to be found to transport the gene shear to a precise area on the targeted gene or virus. It would hitchhike aboard the molecule and perform its task once there.

The procedure may be used successfully against AIDS within a couple of years, and could be used commercially for other applications in five to 10 years, Gerlach said.

Gene Shears Pty Ltd has applied for process patents throughout the world, he said.

Electric current may help fight AIDS

Meanwhile doctors at a prestigious New York City

medical centre are testing a new way to fight AIDS — using electrical energy to weaken the killer virus — and say their first results are encouraging.

Researchers William Lyman and Steven Kaali of the Albert Einstein School of Medicine said recently that initial laboratory tests have shown that electrical current can weaken the virus suspected of causing Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

In telephone interviews with Reuters, they said they plan to move into the next stage of testing in April using blood samples from people with AIDS.

If their tests are successful, they hope it could lead to a new way to treat AIDS patients, possibly involving a dialysis-type machine in which an AIDS patient's blood would be treated with electrical current outside the body.

"What we have done is expose the AIDS virus in

laboratory circumstances to electrical current and then incubated the virus with white blood cells susceptible to the virus. We found that the virus became much more ineffective," Kaali, a specialist in the medical use of electrical current, said.

Lyman, an AIDS researcher and associate professor of pathology at Einstein, likened the new technique to chemotherapy.

"You are not going to get rid of the tumour, but you could get rid of enough of it to help the patient lead a normal life. This is not a cure, but a new tool," he said.

Lyman said that the use of electrical energy had no toxic side effects. He said the next phase of the research should be finished in a year.

The two presented their preliminary findings at a medical conference at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., where their AIDS researchers called it an interesting concept.

King

(Continued from page 1)

among Arabs and Israelis and would soon test the commitment of all sides to peace.

He gave no details but said his next move would be to advance specific ideas and proposals "to see whether or not stereotypes can be broken, old rigid and inflexible positions can be adjusted and compromised, because without that there won't be peace."

Mr. Baker's meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's adviser, Osama Al Bas, took place Monday.

Prince

(Continued from page 1)

past years. The divisions in the Arab World caused by the Gulf crisis represented a national catastrophe by all standards, and should the Arabs remain hostage to the past events the disaster would be deepened, the Crown Prince said.

He said that it was up to the Arab leaders and masses to end the differences and heal the wounds so that they can safeguard higher national interests. King Hussein has been the first Arab leader to call on Arabs to unify their ranks and reestablish self-confidence, the Crown Prince noted.

Referring to the situation in the Gulf, the Crown Prince expressed hope that the ceasefire would serve as the first step towards establishing stability and the beginning of a reconstruction process.

Describing the current events in the south and north of Iraq as consequences of the Gulf war, the Crown Prince hoped that the Iraqi people will reach a formula for national understanding so that they can safeguard Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Prince Hassan called on the Arabs to open a new chapter in their relations.

Prince Hassan and Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath returned to Amman late Tuesday night following visits to the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States.

During the ten-day trip, Prince Hassan discussed the Middle East and the Gulf questions, delivered lectures, held television interviews and explained Jordan's position with regard to the problems of the Middle East.

In London, the Prince met with Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd and in Ottawa with Canada's Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and Canadian parliament members to discuss bilateral relations and assistance to the Kingdom in the wake of the Gulf war, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestine problem.

The consequences of the Gulf war on Jordan and other countries of the region constituted the theme of a lecture Prince Hassan delivered at Oxford University during his stay in the United Kingdom.

In San Francisco, Prince Hassan attended an international conference on the Middle East in the aftermath of the Gulf war and delivered an address dealing with the region's questions and the responsibility of the world community to bring about justice and permanent peace.

He met with members of the Jordanian community in San Francisco as well as members of the Arab American chambers of commerce in the West coast of the U.S.

King Hussein led members of the Royal Family, the prime minister and other officials to welcome Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath upon their return to Amman. The British, Canadian and American ambassadors were also present at the airport.

Cabinet

(Continued from page 1)

saboteurs is proceeding according to plan."

"Security forces in cooperation with party organisations and the masses are continuing mopping up Dahuk governorate (in northern Iraq) and related regions and villages," it said.

Government offices had resumed normal activities in all southern governorates and "hundreds of thousands of students are now attending school," it added.

Al Jounhouriyah also accused the U.S. of provocation by sending warplanes over the country, saying the flights would not scare Iraqis.

"The imperialist-Zionist alliance of hatred and aggression is carrying out provocative acts against Iraqi sovereignty," the paper said in an editorial.

"This is represented in a number of American warplanes crossing Iraq's airspace at specific times day and night, the same times when air raids used to be carried out on Iraqi towns and villages during the American-Zionist-Atlantic aggression," it

added.

The U.S.-led allies banned Iraqi fixed wing aircraft from flying after the halt in Gulf war fighting last month but Baghdad is using helicopters to combat the rebels.

The United States is flying combat air patrols over Iraq, controlled by Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft. Two Iraqi fighters have been shot down by U.S. jets since the Feb. 28 halt in the Gulf war.

"Irrespective of the motives for such daily provocative acts, the American administration should well understand... they will not scare the Iraqi people..." the paper said.

"This behaviour will increase the Iraqi people's resentment and reaffirm the (American) administration's spirit of arrogance and aggressiveness harboured towards not only our people but the whole world," Al Jounhouriyah said.

Kurdish guerrillas claimed meanwhile they overran an Iraqi air base near Kirkuk and captured two Soviet-made warplanes.

They also said they seized a government camp at Faardiya, on the road from Dohuk to Mosul, claiming the air base and camp were among the last posts the government had controlled in northern Iraq.

Resolution

(Continued from page 1)

"goes far beyond what the Security Council has decided in the past."

"After all," Mr. Ashtar said, "everybody says, including the United States, that Iraq must be left intact, that they don't want Lebanonisation of Iraq, that they don't want a vacuum there, nor a civil war."

"You can't have all that if you push and press the government so much that it cannot respond and... that becomes the course for more confrontation."

The Iraqi government is currently trying to put down rebellion throughout the country.

The resolution does not establish a permanent ceasefire, but it sets forth the conditions Iraq must meet before a permanent end to hostilities can be achieved.

Soviet Ambassador Yuli Vorontsov said the five permanent members of the council had agreed on its "main elements," although details were still under review in both Moscow and Beijing.

Sensitive to being taken for granted by the major powers, non-aligned nations are expected to take their time studying the draft.

Mr. Vorontsov, in answer to questions, said he understood from official U.S. statements there would not be any U.S. troops remaining permanently in the Gulf.

The ambassador Monday had distributed a paper calling for the eventual reduction of foreign forces to their levels of Aug. 1, 1990, the day before Iraq invaded Kuwait.

The White House said Monday Washington was opposed to ground forces remaining in the Gulf permanently but said President George Bush was considering placing "a portion" of the central command staff in the area as part of new regional "security" arrangements.

Diplomats said the main stumbling point between the five on the resolution concerned the demarcation of the border between Iraq and Kuwait.

Cutting rather than cultivation threatens Sudan's gum exports

By Berhane Woldegabriel

KHARTOUM, Sudan: Taxation and now famine are pushing thousands of Sudanese into cutting down the country's precious acacia trees for charcoal instead of sustainably harvesting them for valuable gum arabic exports.

It is a dramatic example of how poverty can cause environmental damage which itself exacerbates poverty, and the way short-term needs are met at the expense of long-term benefits.

As Khartoum and Western governments argue over the politics and organisation of relief for a famine which a Save the Children Fund official has said may be "the worst this century," hundreds of thousands of people are abandoning the drought-stricken regions of Kordofan and Darfur. Autumn rains have failed for the second year in a row, and as the people flee, they chop acacias and other trees in the desperate hope that they will be able to sell firewood and buy food.

But the thorny acacias, acacia senegal and acacia seyal, are the source of gum arabic, the country's third biggest export earner: \$75 million in 1988/89 according to the World Bank.

Sudan is the largest producer of gum arabic, which is used by Western manufacturers of confectionary and beverages, pharmaceuticals, and artistic, photographic and lithographic materials.

Known locally as *Khashab* and *talab*, acacias grow in a belt covering one-fifth of Africa's largest country, and are an integral part of the cropping system for many of the region's three million peasants and pastoralists.

Its leaves and pods provide fodder for camels, sheep and goats. Its deep roots help reduce

soil erosion and water run-off, acting as a buffer against desertification. The tree also fixed nitrogen in the soil, which encourages the growth of grass for livestock.

The destruction of the acacia tree stems basically from high export taxes and low producer prices, which are fixed by the government.

The London-based International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) says that producer prices have not been raised since 1987-88. Gum Arabic sales now account for only 10 per cent of farm incomes in the areas in which the tree grows, compared with 50 per cent in the 1970s.

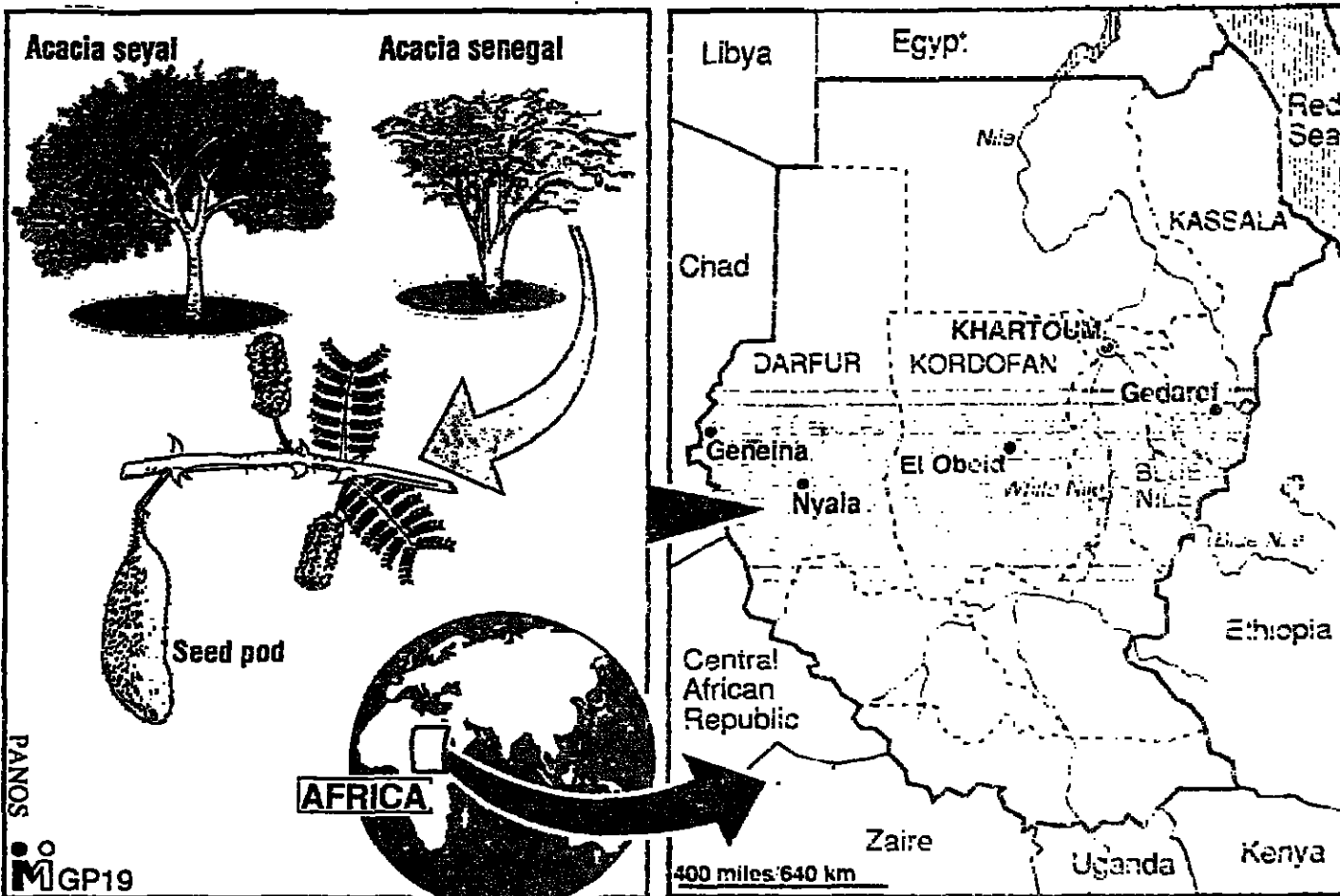
Harvesting gum Arabic is labour intensive and there are labour and transport shortages in the region. The net result is that farmers can make more money from turning acacias into easily sellable charcoal than from producing gum. In addition, currency devaluation, which has reduced cash crop export earnings, and general economic deterioration have sent prices of food and other essentials rocketing.

Gum arabic from the acacia senegal is particularly in demand for specialist uses that require a very high quality gum. But as a result of interruptions in supply and erratic quality, manufacturers have been turning increasingly to substitutes, mostly made in the U.S. from corn starch.

IIED estimates that Sudan in recent years may have lost up to 70 per cent of its share of the total emulsifier/gum market.

Worried by the loss of export earnings and by the effect of the decline of such an important resource on people in the Gum Arabic Belt, the government asked the IIED and Khartoum

Sudan's Gum Arabic Belt



University's Institute of Environmental Studies in 1988 to come up with ideas for rescuing the industry.

They found that rehabilitation was bankable, and the Kuwait-based Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, which paid for the study, showed interest in putting up the money.

But politics intervened. When Sudan's military regime backed Iraq in the recent Gulf crisis, the Kuwaitis shelved their plans for assistance.

According to an official in the Ministry of Planning, there also appears to have been disagreement between the government and the IIED.

Whatever the cause, the second phase of the rehabilitation study has been held up and a precious resource continues to decline — PANOS features.

Palestinians

(Continued from page 1)

after a wave of stabbings in which six Israelis have been killed, five of them in occupied Jerusalem, since the end of the Gulf war.

Hours before the meeting started unknown assailants killed an Israeli settler in a rare use of firearms in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

Yair Mendelson, 30, was ambushed on a lonely road between the village of 'Ein Kinya and the settlement, Dolev, 25 kilometres northwest of Jerusalem, the army said.

His death brought to seven the Israeli toll from attacks since the beginning of March. Three Palestinians have been killed in the same period.

The army imposed a curfew on the village and the neighbouring cities of Ramallah and Al Bireh to search for the assailants.

During Wednesday's three-hour meeting, Mr. Milo urged a ban on Palestinian bachelors under age 30 from entering Israel, saying most assailants have been unmarried men.

The army, however, counters

that it is stretched too thin in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip to try to check the age and marital status of every Palestinian on the road.

Army officials, with Mr. Arens' backing, have called instead for more expulsions and demolitions, Israel Radio said. They want better checking of Palestinians at military roadblocks and a higher police alert for possible attacks in cities.

Rehavam Zeevi, a member of the right-wing Moledet Party, urged more drastic measures, including widespread expulsions and death penalty, the radio said. He also urged a ban on all Arabs entering Israel.

Agriculture Minister Rafael Eitan, a hardliner and former military chief of staff, also supported tough measures.

He told Israel Radio: "I think deporting families of those caught is effective... we must convince the Americans it is a more effective punishment."

Kuwait

(Continued from page 1)

officers, who are working and

training Kuwaiti police, say they are dismayed at the time it is taking the police to resume control over the city...

On Tuesday, the police were supposed to have taken control of the city from the Kuwaiti military but that process has yet to be completed.

"We buried three men here yesterday," a gravedigger said at the Riqqa cemetery, where mass graves holding between six and 10 people have been filled with unknown bodies since the end of the war. "They were all Palestinians. Two were killed with guns. One man had a severed head."

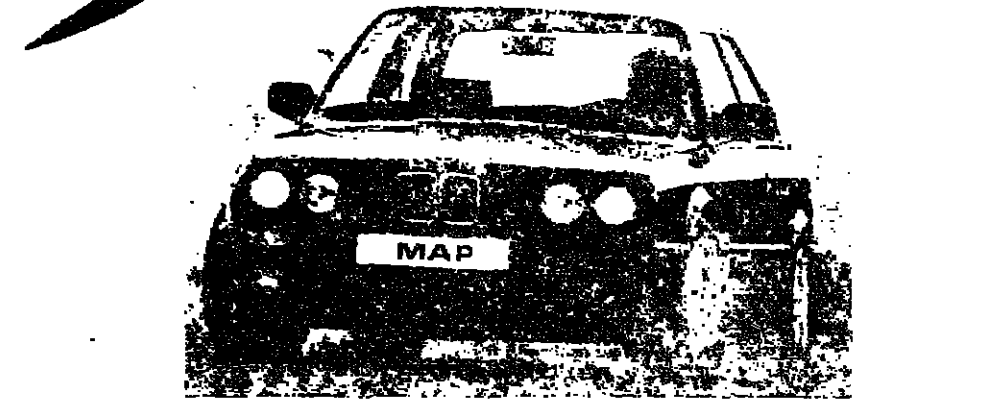
A gravedigger at Sulaibikhat cemetery said 30 unidentified bodies, mostly non-Kuwaitis, have been buried in the cemetery since Feb. 27. He said at least 20 appeared to have died violent deaths, citing wounds and bullet holes on the corpses.

In interviews over the course of a week, numerous Palestinians say the mistreatment they suffered soon after the end of the war continues.

MAP

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Seles, Graf race into 2nd round at U.S. hardcourt

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (R) — Top seed Monica Seles of Yugoslavia and second-seeded German Steffi Graf raced into the second round of the \$225,000 U.S. Women's Hardcourt Tennis Championships with lopsided victories.

Seles, competing in only her second tournament as number one player in the world, showed no mercy for Florencia Labat and dispensed the Argentine 6-0 6-1 in just 50 minutes.

Graf, playing her first tournament as a second seed in more than three years, took out American Audra Keller 6-2 6-1, needing just 10 minutes more than Seles to advance.

Third seed Manuela Maleeva-Fragniere of Switzerland also cruised into the second round with a 6-1 6-2 victory over American qualifier Alycia May.

But fourth seed Raffaella Reggi of Italy was not able to follow the pattern set by the top three as she fell to former top-10 player Pam Shriver 6-3 6-3.

Shriver, now ranked 84th after missing most of the 1990 season, kept Reggi off balance with a

strong serve throughout. Defending champion Seles, who won the prestigious International Players Championships title Saturday, dropped only six points in the 15-minute first set and was challenged more by strong winds than by her opponent.

"The wind made a difference. I had to play safer," said the Yugoslav teenager, who ended Graf's record 186-week hold on the number one ranking on March 11.

Graf, who accepted a late wild card entry into the tournament, was down 2-1 to Keller early in the first set.

The former number one then got down to business and ran off nine successive games to take the first set and a 4-0 lead in the second.

Graf, who won here in 1988, allowed Keller to hold serve one last time 4-1 and then closed out the match.

"I decided on Friday to play the Hardcourts," said Graf, who did not face a single break point in the second set. "It was an extra incentive that Monica was playing

the tournament," she added. Meanwhile former world number one Ilije Nastase of Romania, Argentine Guillermo Vilas and Australian Ashley Cooper have been elected to the International Tennis Hall of Fame, chairman and former tennis great Bill Talbert announced Tuesday.

The trio of former champions will be officially inducted on July 13 during the Hall of Fame Tennis Championships at the Newport Casino, Rhode Island, site of the first U.S. National Championships in 1881.

Nastase, the original bad boy of tennis, was known for his crowd-pleasing on-court antics and fiery temper. Among his 57 career singles titles, Nastase won the U.S. Open in 1972 and the French Open in 1973, the year he was ranked number one in the world.

Vilas, one of the great great court players of the 1970s, won the French and U.S. Open title in 1977 and captured consecutive Australian Open crowns in 1978 and 1979.

Cooper fell one title short of completing the Grand Slam in 1958 when he won Wimbledon and the United States and Australian National Championships, failing to capture only the French title. Cooper also won the Australian crown in 1957.

Cooper was a member of Australia's Davis Cup champions in 1957. Nastase and Vilas also both played Davis Cup for their countries.



Monica Seles

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Toyota, Lancia start muddy battle in Safari Rally

NAIROBI (R) — The Toyota and Lancia teams started a muddy battle Wednesday as the Kenya Safari Rally began just days after the start of the rainy season.

Drivers expressed mixed feelings about the rainy weather which began last weekend in time to muddy the 4,500-kilometre course following one of the driest periods on record in Kenya.

"It's fine, it'll do to settle the dust," said Sweden's Bjorn Waldegaard, last year's winner who is seeking a fifth victory.

But Waldegaard's colleague in the Toyota team, world champion Carlos Sainz of Spain, said the wet weather could be a problem after practicing for the six day race in dry conditions.

Sainz, leading this year's rally championship after winning in Monte Carlo and Portugal, finished fourth in Kenya last year.

and admitted he was ill-prepared for the rigours of the course. "This year I am better informed about the Safari," Sainz said. "I want a better result this time."

Cars were flagged off from the centre of Nairobi and, after a special stage around a horse-racing track in the suburbs, the first day takes a winding 800-kilometre route through the Taita Hills to Mombasa on the coast.

The main challengers to Toyota, whose third driver is Mikael Ericsson of Sweden, were the Lancia drivers led by former world champion Miki Biasion of Italy.

"I hope it will be better than last year, more like '88 and '89," said Biasion, who won in each of those years but had to withdraw with mechanical problems last year.

Sacchi, under contract until the end of the next season, may agree to terminate it earlier to make way for a new man.

Despite a 1-0 win in last Sunday's Milanese derby game against Internazionale, Berlusconi believes Milan need a shake-up.

The Italian newspaper "Gazzetta dello Sport" has reported that Milan President Silvio Berlusconi was considering a change after a disappointing month

which also saw the club effectively ruled out of the title race.

Superb three-pointers by Americans Mark Davis (21 points) and Kevin Magee (20 points) had helped give Cai their earlier lead.

But in the last minute Cai's Joaquin Ruiz Lorente missed an open layup which would have tied the game at 74-74.

Paok Salonika wins European basketball final

GENEVA (R) — Paok Salonika of Greece beat Cai Zaragoza 76-72 in a bad-tempered European Cup Winners' Cup men's basketball final which was halted for several minutes when the crowd pelted the players with coins.

Vociferous Greek fans began throwing coins when centre Pantogiannis Fasoulas became the second Paok player to be fouled out six minutes into the second half.

Promoter wants new referee for Tyson-Ruddock rematch

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — The world demands a rematch between Mike Tyson and Donovan "Razor" Ruddock, says promoter Don King. And he's happy to oblige.

One thing the world also demands, according to co-promoter Murad Mohammad, is a different referee.

"Even the world will not take Richard Steele again," Mohammad said after he and King announced the June 28 rematch Tuesday at the convention of the National Cable Television Association. The site again will be the Mirage at Las Vegas.

Steele's decision to stop the scheduled 12-round fight in the seventh round on March 18 touched off a storm of controversy. There was a brawl in the ring, and Steele was kicked before being led away by security guards.

Both promoters said that the rematch will be bigger financially

than the first fight, which they said was a success. It also will be shown on King Vision pay-per-view television.

"Razor" Ruddock will make more in two non-title fights than Michael Spinks made fighting Tyson," Mohammad said. Spinks got \$13 million for his first-round knockout loss to Tyson in 1988 when Tyson was undisputed heavyweight champion.

Ruddock was down in the second round, although tape showed he went down when he lost his balance, and was knocked down again in the third before rallying to stagger Tyson late in the sixth.

Tyson landed a series of head shots that staggered Ruddock in the seventh round and sent him backward. Steele suddenly turned his back on Ruddock and motioned that the match was over.

"What?" asked Ruddock when he realised what Steele had done.

"There are two schools of thought about stopping the fight," King said. "I'm of the school that thinks he did the right thing."

Tyson talked about a rematch immediately after the fight.

"Tyson said, 'It didn't count, because he ain't dead,'" King said. "Many people thought the fight was prematurely stopped. It ensued with a lot of activity in the ring. What we're trying to do now is present one of the most exciting fights ever put before the public, because here's a man who stood toe-to-toe with Tyson for seven rounds."

Tyson was ahead by six points on all three official scorecards after six rounds, but the hard-punching Ruddock still appeared dangerous.

There also will be three championships bouts on the card, King said.

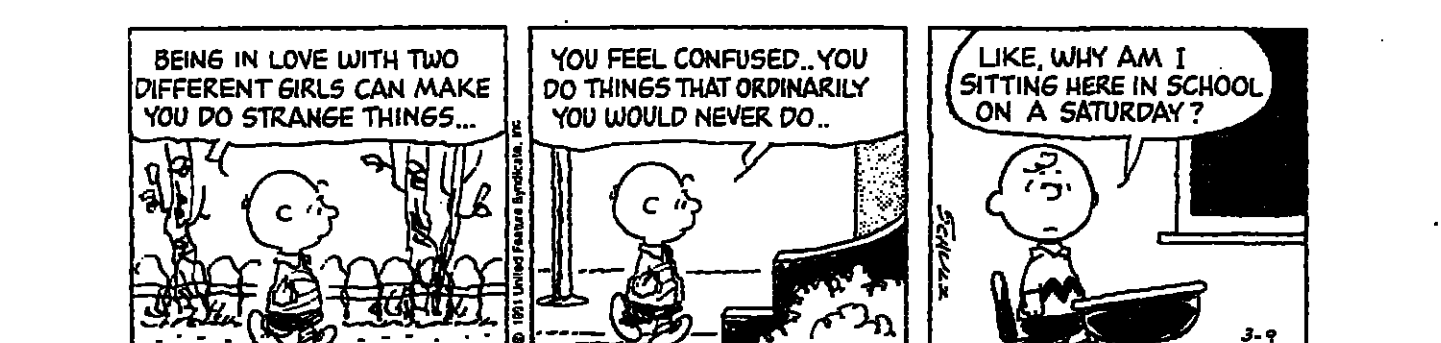
Julio Cesar Chavez of Mexico, the International Boxing Federation and World Boxing

Council (WBC) junior welterweight champion, might fight Loreto Garza of Sacramento, California, the World Boxing Association champion.

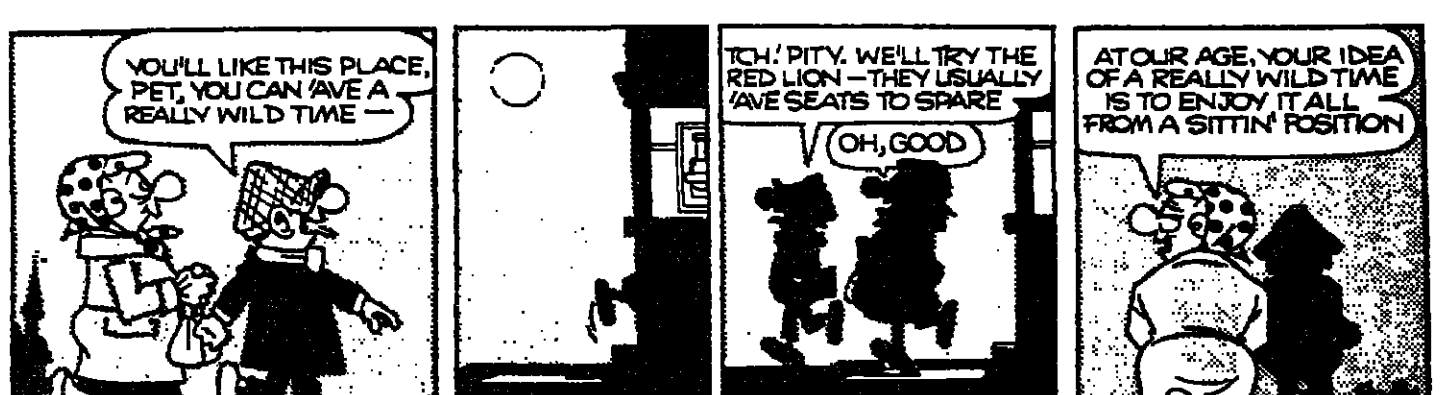
The referees led the two teams off the court, some of the players covering their heads as they ran for shelter.

The game continued a few minutes later after Fasoulas had

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY MARCH 28, 1991
Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: A beautiful day for putting in motion some brilliant ideas that have entered your mind and for seeing and being with prominent persons who will offer positive suggestions for your project.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) You can have one of your happiest of days both through planning and also through some unexpected conditions arising that bring you delight.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Your family wants to see more of you and you can gain their goodwill for sometime to come by relaxing or entertaining them in your own home.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 21) Getting out in the world of action and showing your daily companions that you enjoy working along with them on your joint projects pleases them.

MOON CHILDREN (June 22 to July 21) You need to enlarge your horizons if you are to have the biggest success in a financial nature to which you are committed.

LEO (July 22 to August 21) This is your day to do what comes up in your physical system, what brings you more magnetism and then go off to social sojourns to impress all you meet.

VIRGO (August 22 to September 22) Whatever you would like to do that requires some additional preparation of a personal and private nature is right now so get into more efficiency.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) A magnanimous and generous

friend sees your best points and is willing to go along with some personal aims if you will let him know what that is.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) This is your time to go straight to that influential higher up to get him to go along with what you would like to have done by this day.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) This is your day to expand your sights to take in far more sagacity, wisdom and understanding than you have had before this day.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 20) You would be wise to drop much of that sour reserve you express so much now and let others see that you genuinely value and appreciate their association.

AQUARIUS (January 21 to February 19) Partners are in a generous mood now and can see your mutual understandings in their largest potentials so get together for their help.

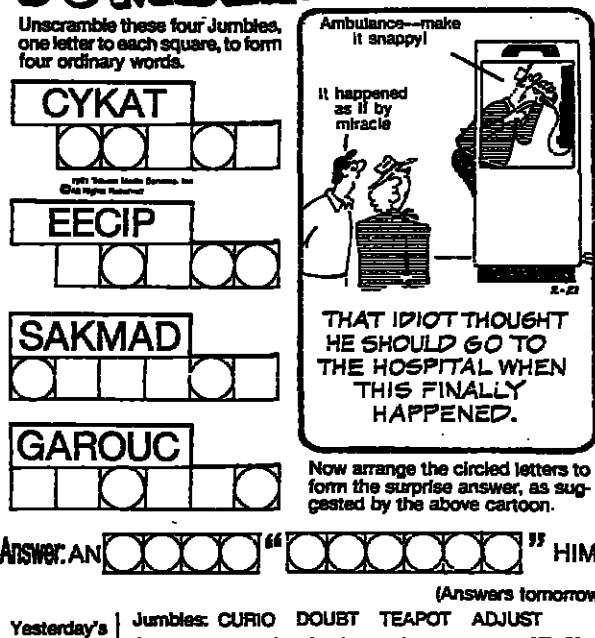
PISCES (February 20 to March 20) Lots of projects await your attention and you can best do it by the steadiness with which you attend to some highly pleasant tasks.

Today's child: If your child were born today he or she fascinates others with their powers of good judgment and the ability to see through any false premises. This child will achieve a great deal and have a large impact on the lives of friends, close associates and family who have the good sense to accept this progeny's wise council.

THE BETTER HALF



JUMBLE



THE Daily Crossword by I. Miller



Iran to hike air fares Wednesday

NICOSIA (R) — Iran's national airline said Tuesday it would raise ticket prices to overseas destinations from April 3 because of new central bank currency regulations.

An Iran Air statement read on Tehran Radio did not say by how much prices would rise.

It said the central bank had decided to supply Iran Air's hard currency needs from next week at the so-called competitive rate of 600 riyals per dollar instead of the official rate of about 68 riyals.

To cushion the rise a 200,000-riyal tax per ticket imposed three years ago would be repealed, the statement added.

The new prices apply to Iranian travellers. The statement did not say if foreigners flying on Iran Air, who already pay in hard currency, would be affected.

The government, trying to eliminate subsidies and cut the budget deficit, is switching to the competitive rate or to a new floating rate of about 1,350 riyals per dollar for the import of more goods and services.

The policy, amounting to a devaluation of the rial, has been criticised in parliament as inflationary.

South American presidents sign blueprint for common market

ASUNCION, Paraguay (R) — The presidents of Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay signed a blueprint Tuesday to build a gigantic common market — stretching from the Equator to the Antarctic — to compete with other world trading blocs.

The Southern Common Market Treaty, known as Mercosur, would dismantle trade barriers and encourage cross-border investment and joint projects over the next four years. It aims to integrate neighbouring nations that have been stunted by protectionism, rivalry and political instability.

"The American dream is becoming reality. The year 1995 will find us united and not dominated," said Argentina President Carlos Menem.

Mercosur's architects hope that

with cooperation instead of competition, the South American nations can channel their immense natural resources into sustained development and prosperity, overcoming widespread economic troubles.

The four countries have a combined gross national product of \$400 billion and a fast-growing population of 180 million.

But one noteworthy non-member of Mercosur is Chile, which has built the region's most stable economy through a free market programme of export-led development.

Chile has argued that its own trade tariffs are already lower than those of the highly protected Mercosur partners.

After a visit to Santiago last week, Uruguay President Luis Lacalle said Chilean President

Patricio Aylwin was noncommittal on the question of Chile's eventual membership.

"The presence or the absence of Chile in the long run will be a sign of Mercosur's efficiency. If Chile chooses to join, it will be proof it is working," Lacalle said.

Breaking the ground for Mercosur were Argentina and Brazil, who signed a \$2 billion bilateral treaty in 1986.

Argentina's Menem and his Brazilian counterpart Fernando Collor de Mello last year decided to expand the agreement and form a free trade zone, an initiative enthusiastically taken up by Uruguay and Paraguay.

Despite widespread initial cynicism and opposition from businesses resentful of outside competition, trade between Brazil and Argentina has flourished,

particularly in food products, while multinational automakers have modernised production at plants in the two countries.

Many in South America hope that, despite formidable economic obstacles, Mercosur will emerge as a major trading power capable of holding its own in global trading.

"We are seeing the creation of new and powerful mega-markets from the Europe of 1992, Japan and the tigers of the Pacific to the emerging North American market," Uruguayan Foreign Minister Hector Gros Espiell wrote in a newspaper article supporting Mercosur.

The partnership also fits into an overall plan for a free-trade zone stretching "from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego" proposed by President Bush.

Japan offers Egypt new soft loan

CAIRO (R) — Japan, seeking to help countries worst hit by the Gulf crisis, has offered Egypt a \$176 million soft loan to finance commodity imports, a Japanese embassy official said Wednesday.

Egypt could use the loan, offered in yen, to finance past or future imports and there were no strings attached on the origins of goods purchased, the official added.

The final value of the loan, carrying an interest rate of one per cent and repayable over 20 years with a 10-year grace period, could change according to exchange rates, he said.

Egypt says the Gulf crisis cost it billions of dollars in lost tourism receipts, lost transfers from Egyptian expatriates in the Gulf and lost Suez Canal revenue.

The official could not say when the loan agreement would be concluded, noting that Egypt had a complicated approval mechanism for international agreements.

Japan offered a \$323 million loan with identical terms late in 1990 as part of a \$2 billion package to states hit by the Gulf crisis. That loan was initially agreed in December but only formally approved by Egypt two months later.

Tunisia likely to record zero growth in 1991

TUNIS (R) — The Tunisian economy is heading for zero growth in 1991 because of the Gulf crisis, the rapporteur of a parliamentary committee said Tuesday.

Jilani Daboussi of the finance and planning committee told a budget debate that the government had abandoned its December 1990 estimate that the economy would grow by 4.5 per cent.

"The Gulf war is expected to have a major negative effect on the rate of growth of economic activity, especially in tourism and exports. The budget has been revised on the basis of stagnation in the GDP growth at constant prices, instead of a 4.5 per cent increase," he said in a committee report.

That would make it the worst year for the economy since 1986, when it shrank by one per cent. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) rose 6.5 per cent in 1990 and 3.5 per cent in 1989.

Parliament was meeting to discuss a supplementary budget which raises 120 million dinars (\$128 million) through extra taxes to help cover the loss of 210 million dinars (\$224 million) in government revenue.

Under the revised budget, all

salaries will lose five days' pay to the treasury and import duties will be increased by five per cent for the rest of this year.

The government has already put up the prices of petrol, cigarettes and alcoholic drinks to raise 25 million dinars (\$27 million) in extra revenue.

Cuts in ministry budgets will help close the gap by a further 85 million dinars (\$90 million).

The committee report said tourism was the sector worst affected by the Gulf crisis. Foreign exchange earnings from visitors would be about 33 per cent below the original forecast of 995 million dinars (\$1,060 million).

The Europeans who make up the vast majority of the tourists in Tunisia have stayed away for fear of violence. Tunisia took a strongly pro-Iraqi stand in the Gulf war.

The report said earnings from oil exports would be about five per cent below the original estimate of \$80 million (\$620 million) and other exports would also fall.

The result would be a rise in the balance of payments deficit to 650 million dinars (\$690 million) from 380 million (\$405 million).

Bank Leumi profits plunge

TEL AVIV (R) — Bank Leumi le-Israel Limited, Israel's second largest banking group, said Wednesday that its profits dropped sharply in 1990 and blamed losses overseas and defaults on debts at home.

A bank statement said net profits for the 1990 calendar year

were 74 million shekels (\$32.99 million) down from 181 million shekels (\$78.3 million) in 1989.

Leumi, with its subsidiaries Union Bank and Arab Israel Bank, has 291 high street branches in Israel and the biggest foreign operation of any Israeli

bank.

The statement said major causes of the drop in profits were losses of 74.5 million shekels (\$33.21 million) by subsidiaries in the United States, chiefly Bank Leumi Trust Company of New York, and losses due to Israeli farmers defaulting on debts.

Australian firm wins meat deal with Iran

SIDNEY (R) — An Australian meat company has won a 30 million dollar (\$23 million) meat contract with Iran.

Metro Meat Holdings said it has reached agreement to supply 21,000 tonnes of mutton after four months of negotiations with Iranian authorities.

"This sale is a significant achievement by Metro Meat and is the first large Australian mutton sale to the region since the end of the Gulf war," managing director Jack Ware said.

Metro Meat, a member of the struggling Adelaide Steamship Group, said the contract will require 1.5 million sheep over the next four months.

The contract will provide a much needed fillip to Australia's sheep industry at a time when many farmers are having to destroy stock because of dwindling market prices, Ware said in a statement.

He said efforts were underway to regain valuable Australian export markets which were disrupted during the Gulf war.

Oman details chrome discovery

NICOSIA (R) — Oman's ruler Sultan Qaboos says 425 deposits of chrome have been discovered in the country, which is seeking to diversify from oil.

Qaboos told the Omani News Agency the deposits were scattered all over the country but gave no estimate of their recoverability.

Qaboos said a company would be formed from private and public capital to develop the find.

Oman produces as much as 700,000 barrels per day and its oil reserves are 4.3 billion barrels, a tiny figure compared with those of its Gulf neighbours.

U.S. and Germany can tolerate high value of dollar against mark

Bonn warns of limits to its contribution to global economy

WASHINGTON (R) — German Finance Minister Theo Waigel defended his country's contribution to the Gulf war Tuesday and warned of limits to how much Bonn can do to aid the world economy.

"We can't do everything alone," he told reporters. "We must ensure that our economy does not become overburdened."

Waigel said Germany was already laying out billions of dollars for the Gulf war effort, the unification of the country and to the reforming economies of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

"The German contribution... is considerable," he said. "Our contribution not only serves German and European interests but also the interests of the entire Western world."

Some U.S. lawmakers have criticised both German and Japan for not doing more in the Gulf even though both their economies are more dependent than the United States on oil from the region. Neither nation sent troops to the Middle East, citing constitutional restraints on their military.

Waigel reiterated that Germany would come through with the entire \$5.5 billion it pledged to the United States to help defray the costs of the Gulf war, despite domestic opposition to doing so.

Bonn is scheduled to make a final \$1.68 billion payment on its commitment Thursday.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl's

centre-right government has been urged by the Social Democratic opposition not to pay all the money earmarked for the Gulf operation because the war ended sooner than expected and may cost less than anticipated.

Waigel said Brady had not asked for more money for the Gulf and that the United States had expressed appreciation for what Bonn has done.

"This should pull the rug out from under the unnecessary domestic debate in Germany stimulated by the opposition," Waigel said.

To help pay for Germany's contribution to the war and the costs of unification, Kohl's government has been forced to raise taxes, triggering a storm of domestic opposition.

Thousands of demonstrators have taken to the streets in Germany to protest against the government's economic policies and the hardships of unification.

Waigel said Bonn had earmarked 100 billion Deutsche marks (\$60 billion) in its budget towards the cost of unification.

It has also contributed 25 billion marks (\$15 billion) to help Eastern Europe and spent more than that aiding the Soviet Union and smoothing the way for the withdrawal of 880,000 troops from former East Germany, he said.

On mark-dollar exchange rates Waigel said his country and the United States could tolerate the current high value of the dollar against the mark.

"Both sides can live with them (the current rates)," Waigel told a news conference.

Waigel said the current dollar level was no hindrance to an upturn beginning in the U.S. economy.

He said he and U.S. Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady had not discussed specific measures to stabilise the dollar-mark rate.

"The mark is at an okay level," Waigel said.

Waigel had told reporters earlier that major nations had been working closely together to cope with the rapid rise of the dollar.

He said there were both advantages and disadvantages in a stronger dollar. Some in the U.S. would certainly like to see a lower dollar to help exports.

Horst Koehler, state secretary in Germany's finance ministry, told reporters the recent rise in the dollar meant the mark value of Germany's contribution to the U.S. for the Gulf war costs would be 430 million marks (\$253 million) more than expected.

This would boost Germany's contribution to the Gulf war to 18.3 billion marks (\$10.8 billion).

In January Germany's contribution had been estimated at 17.6 billion marks (\$10.4 billion).

But Waigel said this additional cost would neither burden the German economy, nor the federal budget.

He repeated Germany would pay \$1.68 billion to the United States Thursday from dollar holdings at the Bundesbank.

Midway Airlines files for bankruptcy protection

CHICAGO (R) — Midway Airlines Inc. filed for chapter 11 bankruptcy Tuesday, making it the third major U.S. carrier to be operating under protection from its creditors.

The Chicago-based airline, the 12th largest in the United States, said it was hurt by a decline in

traffic and a sharp rise in fuel prices because of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait last August. It said jet fuel prices in the fourth quarter were as much as double July's levels.

Midway said it filed a petition with the U.S. bankruptcy court for the northern district of Illinois to reorganise under chapter 11 of the federal code. In chapter 11, a company is protected from creditors while it reorganises and tries to work out a plan to repay its debts.

In December, Continental Air-

lines filed for bankruptcy protection, citing high fuel costs and heavy debts, and Pan Am sought chapter 11 protection in January.

In addition, Eastern Airlines, which had been struggling to emerge from bankruptcy for nearly two years, stopped flying in January and is being liquidated after 62 years of service.

Midway said it arranged a \$40 million secured line of credit with Continental bank, which will enable it to continue operating during the reorganisation.

"We are committed to the

maintenance of our published schedules and to honour all passenger reservations and tickets," said Chairman David Hinson.

Last month Midway reported a huge fourth-quarter loss of \$86 million and said it suspended all aircraft lease and loan payments as of late December. Its loss for the year was \$139.2 million, or \$13.98 a share.

Midway said the \$40 million credit line is for 18 months and is secured by all real and personal property of the airline and its subsidiaries.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Wednesday, March 27, 1991		Central Bank official rates	
Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell
U.S. dollar	677.0	461.8	
Pound Sterling	1196.2	203.4	
Deutsche mark	403.7	406.1	
Swiss franc	474.7	477.5	
French franc	119.0	119.7	
Japanese yen (for 100)	489.4	492.3	
Dutch guilder	358.2	360.3	
Swedish crown	111.4	112.1	
Italian lira (for 100)	54.4	54.7	
Belgian franc (for 10)	193.9	195.1	

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Wednesday

One Sterling	1.7535/45	dollars
One U.S. dollar	1.1592/97	Canadian dollar
	1.6845/55	Deutsche mark
	1.3960/70	Dutch guilders
	1.4350/60	Swiss francs
	34.66/70	Belgian francs
	5.1444/49	French francs
	1251/1252	Italian lire
	138.45/55	Japanese yen
	6.0950/1000	Swedish crowns
	6.5600/5700	Norwegian crowns
	6.4620/70	Danish crowns
One ounce of gold	357.00/357.50	U.S. dollars

WORLD STOCK MARKETS

TOKYO — An early spurt prompted by Wall Street fizzled out. The Nikkei index fell 234.73 points to 26,104.65.

SYDNEY — The market failed to sustain an early round of buying. The All Ordinaries index ended down 0.1 at 1,437.1.

HONG KONG — Early orders petered out and investors, touched by pre-holiday languor, settled back to await last major results announcements. The Hang Seng index rose 7.92 to 3,691.82.

SINGAPORE — Early bargain hunting gave way to profit-taking in quiet trade. The Straits Times industrial index ended up 6.58 at 1,472.50.

FRANKFURT — Solid earnings from Deutsche Bank and a modest recovery of the mark helped the Dax index climb 10.36 points to 1,508.80.

ZURICH — The SPI index gained 16.8 points to 1,059.3. Sentiment was supported by Wall Street's strength and hopes that Swiss interest rates would fall.

PARIS — The CAC-40 index tested 1,800 and closed up 21.97 to 1,797.06, its highest since March 15. "It should trade around this level from now on," one broker said.

LONDON — Confidence returned to the market. The FTSE index rose 27 points to 2,464.6. Saatchi gained shareholder approval for a 55 million sterling rights issue.

NEW YORK — U.S. Blue Chips were lifted by continued buying in technology, retailing and drug stocks. At 1730 GMT the Dow Jones industrials were up 18.32 to 2,933.17.

U.S. economy records 1.6 per cent contraction in fourth quarter of 1990

WASHINGTON (R) — The U.S. economy shrank at a 1.6 per cent annual rate in the final quarter of 1990, the government said Wednesday, less than the previously estimated 2.0 per cent rate.

The smaller decline than earlier estimated was partly because U.S. exports were higher than originally thought, the Commerce Department said.

The report on gross national product, the total output of goods and services, was the second and final measure of the U.S. economy during the final three months of last year. A month ago the government said the economy

had contracted at a 2.0 per cent rate in the quarter.

But foreign sales of American-made goods were revised upwards on the basis of later information, improving the overall performance, Commerce Department officials said.

Exports rose \$16.7 billion in the fourth quarter, up from \$10.9 billion estimated last month, after gaining \$10.4 billion in the third quarter.

Imports fell \$21.0 billion in the quarter, compared to a drop of \$17.1 billion previously estimated. Imports grew by \$12.3 billion in the third quarter.

The economy is expected to

contract again in the current quarter, thus meeting the traditional definition of recession: Two straight quarters of declining economic output. The Bush administration has said it hopes the recession will be short and that growth will resume by mid-1991.

The first look at the U.S. economy's overall performance for the first quarter will not be available for another month. In the third quarter of last year, gross

national product expanded at a 1.4 per cent annual rate.

For all of 1990, the economy grew at a slim 1.0 per cent rate, its poorest performance since the recession year 1982, when it declined 2.3 per cent.

Despite another drop in car sales in mid-March from year-earlier levels, a report by the Conference Board business group Tuesday said consumer confidence rebounded strongly

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Cinema Tel: 699238
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TIGER ON THE BEAT
Show: 12:30, 3:15, 8:00, 10:00 p.m.

Cinema Tel: 677420
CONCORD
Duraid Laham — Madlin Tabar
in
Kafroon
Show: 3:30, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

Cinema Tel: 675571
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in
THE REVENGE
(Arabic)
12:30, 3:30, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

Mali strikers return to work after coup

BAMAKO, Mali (AP) — Malians returned to work Wednesday in a ransacked capital marred by burned-out buildings set ablaze in rioting that followed the overthrow of the country's military president by soldiers.

International relief workers said at least 200 people have been killed in the violence that led to Tuesday's overthrow of Gen. Moussa Traore, the West African nation's leader of 23 years.

Pro-democracy leaders were meeting to discuss promises by coup leader Lt.-Col. Amadou Toumani Touré to set up an interim cabinet that would include civilians.

Military officials said Traore, who is under arrest, and his family were under heavy guard. They would not discuss their plans for him.

Mali's main National Union of Workers called off a general strike that began Monday, and tens of thousands of people returned to work Wednesday, heeding the union's advice to await developments in "the new political situation."

Red Cross workers were cleaning up blood-stained floors at the city's main Gabriel Touré Hospital, hospital administrator Ibrahim Diallo said in a telephone interview.

"It's a mess, the morgue floor is covered with bodies, but things

are much calmer today," Diallo said. "The city is quiet, the looting stopped yesterday, and sanitation workers have begun a limited service to tidy up the debris."

The flow of wounded to the hospital ended Tuesday night, he said, but people still were dying from gunshot wounds and he was reluctant to estimate the death toll. Diallo said the Department of Health has started compiling an official toll.

At least 200 people have been killed and several hundred injured, according to international relief workers and Demba Diallo, a lawyer and human rights leader who is chairman of group called the Committee of Pro-Democracy Associations.

The violence started Friday when soldiers opened fire on peaceful student protesters, provoking riots by tens of thousands of people who demanded Traore's resignation. At least 148 civilians were killed in three days of rioting. Protesters armed with homemade firebombs set government buildings ablaze and shops and gas stations belong to leaders of Traore's People's Democratic Union, which coup leaders disbanded Tuesday.

"The damage is terrible," said a hotel receptionist who requested anonymity. "Everyone just wanted to avenge themselves

because those people built their businesses with money looted from the government treasury."

Early Tuesday, soldiers arrested Traore, and at least 59 civilians were killed after the coup, medical officials said. Most were looted by the military, but a few were supporters of Traore burned to death by protesters, they said.

The military closed the international airport and cut telephone and television lines Tuesday, but it restored communications later in the day and reopened the airport.

Meanwhile, in the Senegalese capital of Dakar, dozens of Malians demonstrated outside their country's embassy Tuesday, demanding Traore be tried for "crimes committed against the people."

The demonstrators waved placards demanding soldiers return to their barracks, and saying they recognise only the country's pro-democracy associations.

In Washington, U.S. government spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said: "We encourage the Committee of Reconciliation to restore order, to seek political resolution through dialogue and move toward pluralistic democracy as soon as possible."

Toure has set up a 17-soldier Council of National Reconciliation and promised to name "a cabinet of openness which will



Gen. Moussa Traore

take into account, as much as possible, the various shades of opinion in our country."

It would hold a national conference to choose a transition government charged with organising democratic elections, he said.

"The army will no longer meddle in politics," Touré, 43, promised in a radio broadcast. "The army will return to its barracks (after) establishing an unlimited multiparty system, social justice and total democracy."

However, some observers privately have voiced concern that some members of the National Reconciliation Council were close to Traore, including his aide-de-camp, Lt.-Col. Oumar Diallo, and Lt.-Col. Cheikh Oumar Diarra, who was director of Traore's Defense Ministry.

Toure seized power in a 1988 coup and installed himself as a civilian president of a one-party state in 1979.

14 killed at S. African funeral vigil

ALEXANDRIA, South Africa (R) — Gunmen firing wildly from automatic weapons killed at least 14 mourners and wounded 18 at a funeral vigil in Alexandria township early Wednesday.

Police said they removed 12 bodies from a tent among squatter shacks in the township in northern Johannesburg and a nearby clinic said two more people died there from bullet wounds.

Survivors of the 4.20 a.m. (0220 GMT) attack said men armed with AK-47 assault rifles burst into the tent where the vigil was being held for a youth killed in weekend political violence and began firing indiscriminately.

They then waded into the mass of dead, dying and wounded and began haying with pangas — long cane cutting knives.

Police said the attack was not political as the victims were not connected to a political organisation.

But one report linked the killing to fighting between the African National Congress (ANC), the biggest black opposition group, and the rival Inkatha Freedom Party.

David Robb, spokesman for the Alexandria clinic where many of the wounded were treated, said he was told by survivors that the gunmen yelled "you're ANC and we're Inkatha" before open-

ing fire.

Survivor Beatrice Mampane told Reuters the attackers spoke "really proper Zulu from Natal."

Inkatha is predominantly Zulu and is based in Natal province in the east.

ANC spokesman Popo Molefe said the people had gathered in the tent to mourn a woman member of the Congress of South African Students, which supports the ANC.

Jane Ramagala was among 65 people killed in fighting between Inkatha and ANC supporters in the township in the past month. Witnesses said her sister and brother-in-law were killed Wednesday.

Pro-government candidates dominate S. Korean polls

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Pro-government candidates dominated South Korea's first local elections in 30 years, dealing a blow to opposition leaders who had hoped to use the voting to expand their support base.

With more than 98 per cent of the ballots counted early Wednesday, pro-government candidates had taken a majority of seats in most of the 260 local councils to be formed following Tuesday's elections, according to unofficial tallies.

"We are satisfied with the results," said Park Hui-Tae, a spokesman for the governing Democratic Liberal Party (DLP).

The largest opposition party conceded defeat but said the results were not surprising.

"The hastily called elections were meant only to help the government camp," said Park Sang-Chun, a spokesman for the Party for Peace and Democracy.

Only 55 per cent of the 24 million eligible voters cast their ballots in Tuesday's local elections, the first since 1961. The turnout was the lowest in Korean

history.

Tuesday's elections were to form local councils in small cities, counties and municipal wards. They were the first in a series of elections culminating in mid-1992, when voters select provincial governors and mayors.

Under law, political parties could not officially field candidates in Tuesday's elections. But the candidates were permitted to identify themselves by party affiliation or to express support for certain parties.

Unofficial figures compiled by the ruling Democratic Liberal Party showed that more than 50 per cent of the victorious candidates were pro-government, with 19 per cent pro-opposition. The remaining 31 per cent were independents.

Most of those independents also were considered pro-government, the ruling party said.

The governing camp swept virtually all provinces except South Cholla, home of Kim Dae-Jung, head of the Party for Peace and Democracy.

4 U.S. policemen plead innocent to beating charges

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Four white policemen have pleaded innocent to charges stemming from the videotaped beating of a black motorist after their attorneys failed to have a grand jury indictment tossed out.

In soft voices, a sergeant and three of his officers answered "not guilty." The four face maximum penalties of four years to nearly eight years in prison if convicted.

Sgt. Stacey Koon, 40, and officers Laurence Powell, 28, Timothy Wind, 30, and Theodore Briseno, 38, are charged with assault with a deadly weapon and unnecessarily beating a suspect under colour of authority.

Koon and Powell are also charged with filing a false police report and Koon also is accused of being an accessory in a cover up.

In the case that prompted national outrage, motorist Rodney King is seen in a video being beaten 56 times with batons, kicked and shot with a taser electric stun gun during a nighttime traffic stop March 3. Doctors say King may suffer permanent damage from 11 skull fractures.

The videotape was made by a neighbourhood resident, George Holliday, from his balcony. He

was honoured at a ceremony by Kenneth Hahn, a Los Angeles County supervisor. Called a hero, Holliday said, "things like this need to be done."

In other developments, the California Highway Patrol completed an internal investigation of two of its officers on the scene, a county grand jury has reconvened to hear evidence about numerous officers who watched the attack, and the FBI has run into trouble questioning some police officers.

In Washington, civil rights leader Jesse Jackson held an hour-long meeting with President George Bush to discuss heightened concern over police brutality following the Los Angeles incident and other issues.

During the superior court arraignment, lawyers for the four charged policemen lost bids to have the indictment declared insufficient on grounds the charges were vague. They also failed to show the men were entitled to preliminary hearings.

The officers were ordered to appear in court Thursday. Judge Gary Klausner said a trial could probably begin the week of April 28.

Cambodia accuses rebels of chemical attack

BANGKOK (R) — Phnom Penh government radio accused Cambodian guerrilla forces Wednesday of using chemical weapons for the first time in the 12-year-old civil war.

Artillery shells containing "toxic substances" had been fired in northwestern Battambang province, the broadcast, monitored in Bangkok, said.

The chemical weapons were used in a guerrilla assault last week, it said. The offensive had been repulsed, killing five rebels and wounding 10.

The radio gave no further details.

The report could not be independently verified.

A spokesman for one non-Communist guerrilla group said: "This is crap. Where are we going to get chemicals from?"

The spokesman for guerrilla forces loyal to ousted Cambodian ruler Prince Norodom Sihanouk dismissed the report as propaganda.

Senior Thai officers reported Wednesday that heavy fighting was continuing in Battambang province between the Vietnam-backed government and the three-member guerrilla coalition dominated militarily by the radical Khmer Rouge.

"The government has been using all sorts of heavy weapons including aircraft," Lieutenant General Narudol Dejpradiyudh of the Thai army told a news conference.

The guerrillas had made significant advances in some areas and had captured "many" government positions, Narudol said.

Government forces had taken heavy losses.

Phnom Penh had sent heavy reinforcements against the guerrilla front line at Krichum, about 40 kilometres from the Thai border, he said.

Narudol did not identify the guerrillas but the Khmer Rouge usually operates in this area and controls the rich gem-mining area of Pailin just to the west.

UNC shrugs off N. Korean boycott threat

SEOUL (R) — The U.S.-led United Nations Command (UNC) Wednesday shrugged off a North Korean threat to boycott the bilateral military panel overseeing the Korean War truce because a South Korean general now heads the UNC delegation.

"The UNC clearly regrets the North Korean position," a UNC spokesman said of the apparent North Korean threat delivered in a statement issued by the official (North) Korean Central News Agency and monitored in Tokyo.

The statement said the appointment of South Korean Major-General Hwang Won-Tak to head the UNC delegation to the Military Armistice Commission (MAC) made it "impossible... to hold meetings of MAC in the future."

Hwang was named Monday to head the five-member UNC delegation. The 52-year-old Vietnam War veteran is the first South Korean appointed to the post always held in the past by an American officer.

The North Korean delegation is headed by North Korean army Major-General Choe Ui-Ung.

South Korea refused to sign the armistice pact in 1953, and that, coupled with Pyongyang's claim to be the legal government of the entire Korean peninsula form the basis for North Korea's rejection of Hwang's appointment.

North Korean officials at Panmunjom, the cluster of official buildings where the armistice commission meets, had refused to accept Hwang's credentials.

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Bush urges Gorbachev to break CFE deadlock

WASHINGTON (AP) — With a summit conference on hold, U.S. President George Bush has appealed to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev to exert his authority over the military to break a stalemate on two stalled arms treaties, officials have said.

Bush is asking the Soviet leader to remove stumbling blocks to the already-signed Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE) before the United States is willing to attend a superpower summit on nuclear arms, White House Press Secretary Martin Fitzwater said.

A personal letter from Bush to Gorbachev delivered Monday represents a thinly veiled attempt by Bush to get Gorbachev to stop deferring to military commanders whose doubts about weapons reductions is considered by the United States to be the main reason for the stalemate.

The letter urges the Soviet leader to "energise the process" by asserting his authority. Officials who declined to be identified said Tuesday.

Bush also discussed the Soviet situation with the visiting German Finance Minister Theo Waigel.

Waigel told reporters they talked about "how difficult it is right now to provide economic aid for the Soviet Union for a number of reasons."

Waigel said Bush raised the issue of Soviet oppression in the breakaway Baltic republics and said "it would be very important for the Soviet government to set a positive sign in the Baltic states, and that then would make it easier for us to... to provide economic support for the Soviet Union."

The United States is upset over what it considers Soviet violations of the spirit of the CFE treaty.

So deep are the disagreements that Secretary of State James Baker was unable to break the deadlock during a trip two weeks ago to Moscow even though he brought along his senior arms control experts.

Negotiations are due to resume among technical experts on April 15 in Vienna.

The differences on the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (START) are possibly deeper — so much so that Baker found the Soviets unwilling even to discuss them during his Moscow trip.

Baker's analysis of the situation is that Gorbachev was deferring to the Soviet military on arms control in exchange for their political support as he tries to survive criticism of his reform programme.

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Singaporean commandos storm plane, kill hijackers

SINGAPORE (R) — Four Pakistanis who hijacked a Singapore Airlines jet had doused passengers with alcohol and started a countdown to begin killing them when commandos stormed the plane Wednesday and shot them dead, the government said.

The nine-hour drama ended at dawn when the crack commando team swarmed on board the captive Airbus A310 at Singapore's Changi International Airport, freeing 123 people and killing the hijackers.

The hijackers had demanded the release of several prisoners in Pakistan, including the husband of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. They wanted the Airbus refuelled and flown to Australia.

"Right at the onset of the hijack, hijackers said if the people who are detained in Pakistan whom they named were not released, they would kill the passengers," the Ministry of Home Affairs said in a statement.

"Even in the midst of their negotiations with the Singapore authorities, they threatened to set fire to the plane. They doused the floor of the cabin and some of the passenger seats with alcohol and lit a rolled-up newspaper," it said.

"The pilot also informed the negotiating team that the hijackers had doused the cockpit with alcohol."

The rescue team sprang into action when the hijackers started a five-minute countdown to kill their captives, state-run Singapore Broadcasting Corp (SBC) said.

"It became essential to mount the rescue in order to save the hostages," Communications Minister Yee Ning Hong told a news conference.

Two commandos were slightly

injured in the lightning rescue operation that was over in eight minutes, SBC said.

Roger McGovern, an Australian passenger, told SBC that the hijackers took liquor from the first class cabin and sprayed in on economy class passengers.

"They got their lighters ready to set the plane on fire. But they relaxed when they thought the plane was being refuelled to take them to Sydney."

McGovern, a civil engineer, said the hijackers demanded to know whether there were Americans on board. When one passenger stood up, they pointed a knife at his throat and threatened to kill. The American struggled and was punched in the chin.

Two of the hijackers of flight SQ117 said they were wanted in their own country and had killed 29 men, passenger Singapore businessman Ong Cheng Sing said. One said he had carried out a successful hijacking in Pakistan in 1981.

Singapore authorities negotiated with the hijackers for more than eight hours but the talks broke down when the hijackers began their countdown, SBC said.

"We heard electronic beeping sound and then we saw quite a number of black-masked commandos entering the plane shouting 'keep your heads down, we are Singaporeans'," rescued Japanese businessman F. Naruse told Reuters.

"Then we heard popping sounds and everything was over," he said.

The hijackers seized the Airbus A310 with 125 other people on board on a flight from Kuala Lumpur to Singapore late Tuesday.

Gorbachev believes Japanese island dispute must be tackled

MOSCOW (R) — President Mikhail Gorbachev believes Moscow and Tokyo must tackle a territorial dispute that has marred relations since World War II, a spokesman has said.

"The question in both countries is so hot that Mikhail Sergeyevich (Gorbachev) has even joked that it cannot be touched with bare hands. It is so hot that we should approach it and not deny the existence of the problem," spokesman Vitaly Ignatenko told a news briefing.

For decades the Soviet Union had refused to acknowledge the existence of any dispute over four islands occupied by Soviet troops.

Tokyo newspapers are now speculating Gorbachev may raise the issue during a visit to Japan next month.

Some Japanese newspapers have reported that Japan is ready to offer up to 30 billion in much-needed economic aid in return for the islands.

Ignatenko made no reference to such reports.

"We must move closer together, search for ways to enrich our relations by including new elements in our relations," Ignatenko said. "It is important to abandon cast-iron positions."

Gorbachev, seeking aid to shore up his country's stricken economy, is due to visit Japan from April 16 to 19. The visit would have been inconceivable only a few years ago without Moscow agreeing to hand back the four southernmost islands of the Kurile Chain.

The president met Ichiro Ozawa, secretary general of Japan's ruling party, in Moscow to urge recognition of Japanese sovereignty over the islands.

Because of the dispute, Japan has refused to sign a peace treaty with the Soviet Union formally ending their short war in 1945. It has also declined to expand economic ties.

Veteran Pakistani foreign minister quits

ISLAMABAD (R) — Pakistan's veteran foreign minister, Sahabzada Yaqub Khan, has resigned, a government spokesman said Wednesday.

Yaqub Khan held the office for about a decade under military ruler General Muhammad Zia Ul Haq and three subsequent civilian prime ministers.

The 69-year-old Yaqub Khan, a former army general, last month signalled his wish to step down when he told Sharif during a trip to China that he would not seek re-election to the senate (upper house) for personal

reasons.

In Pakistan, a minister must be a member of one of the two houses of parliament.

Sharif said at the time he had agreed to the request.

The formal resignation came after Yaqub Khan's senate term ended on March 20, the secretary said.

Yaqub Khan was seen by critics as responsible for Pakistan's pro-U.S. foreign policy.

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EC agrees to develop joint defence role

LUXEMBOURG (R) — European Community foreign ministers, picking their way through a minefield of national sensitivities, have agreed that the bloc should eventually develop a joint defence role.

But the 12 EC countries remain at odds over how security and defence issues should be handled in a transitional phase which could stretch to the end of the century.

Luxembourg Foreign Minister Jacques Poos told a news conference after talks Tuesday night.

The meeting was the EC's first ministerial session devoted solely to defence, a subject which has split the community into those led by France and Germany which want to lay the basis for a common army and those — like Britain and the Netherlands — which say European defence is the preserve of the NATO alliance.

Poos said that until the late 1990s the EC would entrust its security and defence matters to the Western European Union (WEU), a long-dormant group of nine countries which are in both NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) and the EC.

"The meeting was a discussion between Euro-centrists and Euro-Atlanticists," Dutch Foreign Minister Hans Van Den Broek told reporters.

The ministers agreed that defence will be an essential element as the bloc outgrows its original

trade and economic aims and develops a joint foreign policy through treaty talks begun in December, Poos said.

"There can be no common foreign policy without a defence policy — that's one of our conclusions," said Poos, whose country holds the EC's rotating presidency.

The 12 still disagreed on what links there should be between the EC and the WEU during the transitional phase, Poos said, but most favoured merging the defence body into the community in the medium term.

"The time is not ripe, the minds are not ripe today (for a solution)," he added.

Poos and European Commission President Jacques Delors said they had noticed a softening of some of the more cautious attitudes among member countries which had earlier flatly dismissed a defence role for the EC.

But diplomats said the Netherlands and Britain remained wary of giving the community a say in military matters, fearing a full withdrawal of U.S. forces from Europe if Washington sees its NATO leadership eroded by the EC.

"We want security in Europe and European integration — in that order," a Dutch diplomat said. "European integration is not an aim in itself."

A British official said that although Britain was now agree-

able to a future multinational intervention force under WEU auspices, "we do not see the 12 assuming a defence role — as in 'command, control and operations'."

"What we're talking about now is strengthening the European pillar (in NATO) without discouraging the Americans," said Danish Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen.

In a separate development, the European Commission on Tuesday proposed a tough new approach to setting pollution curbs which would put pressure on the car industry and other sectors to meet strict environmental limits as quickly as possible.

The Commission, the European Community's executive authority, also said it wanted to make environmentally benign "sustainable growth" one of the EC's key objectives.

A U.N. environment and development body which coined the concept defined sustainable growth as meeting "the needs